

messing about in **BOATS**

Volume 35 – Number 12

April 2018

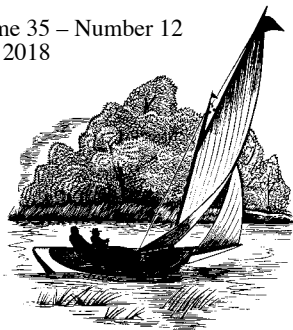
Special Features This Issue
The Lifeboat Disaster of 1886 – Building the Flapdoodle
Hudson River Maritime Museum
Second Sail in a Catboat
Building a West Mersey Duck Punt Part II
Just What Exactly is a Windhorse?



messing about in BOATS

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On the Cover...

Trailer boating has come a long way since 1886. Well, maybe these British NLI lifesavers on the English coast weren't trailer boaters, but you get the idea. Part Three of Keith Muscott's saga of "The Lifeboat Disaster of 1886" from *Dinghy Cruising* is featured in this issue starting on page 10 and carrying on through page 21, a dozen pages this time. All great reading.

2 – Messing About in Boats, April 2018



Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor

I just got back here this morning (March 4) from looking at my next boat. "Whazzat, you ask? You already told us about that Old Town rowboat." Not that one, my "next" one. A couple of days ago it did not exist within my purview and then came an email which read, in part:

"*MAIB* brought many pleasures into my life, not the least of which was one of Steve Wilce's Navigators, which my wife and I took on many beach cruising trips. Now I'm in the midst of a radical downsizing of my material possessions and one of the things I need to let go of is the Navigator. She's been sitting on her trailer for 15+ years, and she needs a LOT of TLC to restore her to her past glory. I'm hoping to give the Navigator away as a "project boat" to someone who will provide her with a good home."

Well, I get to see this sort of thing first and the boat was only six miles from here so I decided to go have a look-see, with old buddy Capt Gnat along for expert advice on the boat's apparent condition. I had some advance knowledge about the Navigator for we had published a feature on it in our September 1, 1988 issue and again as a "25 Years Ago in *MAIB*" feature in our September 2013 issue. At the bottom of this page is a drawing of the boat should your interest be aroused. Yes, I know the type is awfully small, it is intended here to be only an illustration, not a detailed plan. Should you really want to read it, you can do so with some magnification, it's no smaller than that fine print in the backs of medicine bottles, it can indeed be read with magnifying glasses.

A free boat is not always worth it, like who wants a free elephant? A couple of aspects of this boat exerted the fatal attraction:

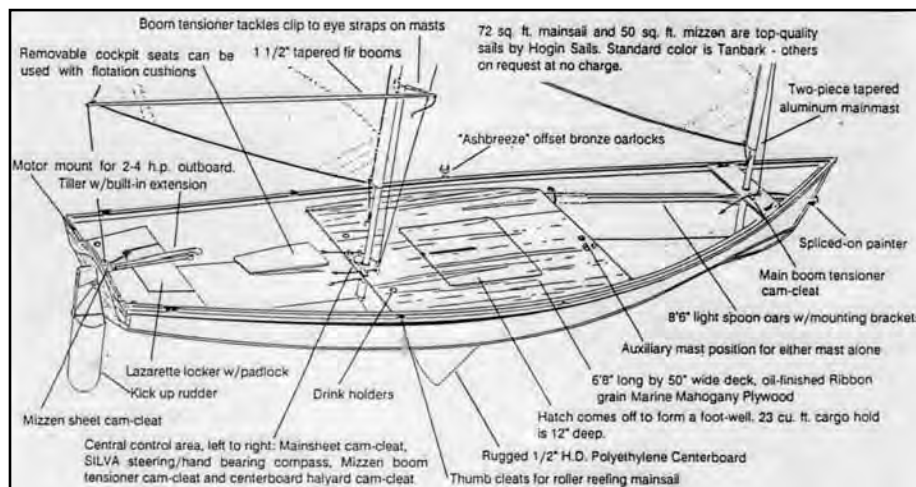
Capt Gnat and I had both been contemplating getting back into rowing this year.

The Capt also has a Fenwick Williams 18' catboat undergoing major restoration, which will not see the water for another couple of years. And I had again been hearing whispers about "sailing" in my cluttered mind which had me sort of heeding them by outfitting my 14' Wilderness Systems Tsunami kayak with some Hobie Adventure Island amas I had acquired and planning to locate some sort of sail to create a sailing trimaran.

The Navigator is built with thin panels of Sealight plastic, a composite of foam plastic coated with polycarbonate plastic sheet. These go onto the hull just like sheets of plywood do. The only flaws we found were dents in each chine where they had rested for 15 years on the trailer bunkers. It should be an interesting experience finding out if the hull was still tight and if the foam flotation built into each panel had absorbed any water. Supposedly it was the sort of foam that does not do this. But, as Gloria of *Dancing Chicken* fame often says, "we shall see."

The boat is completely equipped as it was when last sailed on a six week cruise along the coast of Maine many years ago. So what is not to like about all this? Nothing that I could see, so next week I go over to get the trailer wheels operational again in preparation for towing it home to the field down behind the barn where power is available along with a storage shed for gear and stuff.

Yep, there still is that just started Old Town project, fear not it will slowly proceed as intended. But I'll not be looking for any of those night shift guys that Dan Rogers seems to rely on to keep his much more ambitious projects moving ahead at maxi speed. Capt Gnat and I will proceed apace with getting the Navigator operational by summer by dint of assiduous application of sweat equity during dedicated weekly windows of spare time.



Volunteers

By Boyd Mefferd

Recently in a note to Bob Hicks I confessed that sometimes it seems as if I am out of ideas, so you can be sure that I'm always on the lookout for that "spark" that can turn into an article. This happened unexpectedly while reading "The Lifeboat Disaster of 1886" in the February issue. The article describes the lifeboat crew as 12 "regulars" and three "volunteers." Making this distinction reminds me of the tradition of volunteer help upon which so many institutions rely, most notably many town fire departments and ambulance services, but also almost all of the boating clubs to which some of us belong.

As I was beginning my antique boat dealer career, at a time when I was a lot less patient than I am now, I remember being very critical of boat club decisions which seemed, to me at least, just plain stupid. An older member patiently, but firmly, introduced me to the unwritten rules concerning volunteers and how it was best to avoid harsh criticism of them. Help and assistance are hard to find for club events and volunteers, when criticized, tend to quit. The theory is that it is better to have incompetent help than no help at all. I had a hard time accepting that but, as time has passed, I guess I begrudgingly agree.

Fortunately for the boat clubs, some extremely able people see fit to volunteer and business does get done, but there's always a nagging worry that influence will fall into less capable hands.

The Antique and Classic Boat Society (ACBS) was run entirely by volunteers for most of its 43-year history, but in the past several years they've added a director to the small paid clerical staff. The first paid director didn't last long and, since I'm not an insider, I really don't know why not. The second, and current, director came to the group with little or no boating experience but had worked in the non profit world. I guess there were no shortages of boaters and their opinions, but someone with organizational expertise might help smooth the way forward. I haven't met either the current or the former director so I can't really have that informed an opinion. I do know that some really formidable business people have helped guide the club in past years so it becomes a question of whether the volunteer (often a retiree) leader will have more or less insight than those who are paid. It's too soon to tell, probably, but I do know which is the less expensive.

Financial considerations didn't prevail, however, when volunteers came to the boat shop and offered to work for free in order to learn boat restoration. Over the years, many have been very sincere, but all were turned away for a several reasons.

First was that I was trying to run a boat restoration shop, not a school. Employees who worked here had signed up to be restorers, not teachers. I might have been able to make money from the free labor had the volunteers turned out to be trainable, but customers brought us their boats assuming that they would be worked on by experts, not trainees. Since I never took anyone up on their offers, I really don't know

how entitled the volunteers would have felt, maybe thinking that their working for free gave them rights that "regular" employees did not have. Also, volunteers might have assumed, or at least hoped, that at some point their apprenticeship would turn into a regular paying job. People view apprenticeship in different ways. Historically it has a stigma of exploitation, like indentured servitude. Morally I don't care for it because I believe that everyone deserves to be paid for his or her labor.

Some people have developed more clever, or more subtle, ways to turn away would be apprentices. One amusing story is of a family member who graduated from college and wasn't quite sure what he wanted to do with his life. Some years earlier his parents had purchased a beautiful wooden dining room table from a famous furniture artist of Japanese origin. He fondly remembered going to the shop with them in Pennsylvania often and called the furniture artist to see if he ever accepted apprentices.

"Yes, I do," was the reply, and then the question, "How long were you planning to spend with me."

At least a year," the young man replied. The artist told him, "My son, in a year you can learn to sharpen chisels."

In my dictionary, the first definition of the word volunteer is "one who serves or offers services for any undertaking of his or her own free will, often without expectation of payment." The second definition is, "one who enters military service of his or her own free will." This second definition was more relevant in the days of the military draft, when a term was needed to distinguish between inductees and those who were not.

Many male readers of a certain age probably cringe at the least mention of the draft. I'm sure that we took different routes and had different ideas about what we might be fighting for, but for virtually all it presented a road block between schooling and starting a civilian career. I'm forever grateful that this long established, but questionable, policy was ended and that my son did not have to face the same choices I did.

The all volunteer Army (draftees automatically went into the Army) is gradually giving way to a service which offers better pay and better benefits for recruits (in my day, boot camp pay was \$52 per month for draftees) and more resembles a legitimate job choice than before. There's a long way to go before post service benefits recognize the risks that go with the job. As with any group of people, some persons simply do their job and others go way beyond the call of duty voluntarily. Maybe in the current scheme of things the latter people are the true "volunteers."

Not in my dictionary, but delightful, are the botanical volunteers, plants and flowers that are supposed to be annuals but seed themselves and come up again the next spring without human help. It's a very positive and optimistic use of the word and if I can somehow train myself to think of the boat club volunteers as just as special, unexpected and beautiful, I should have no difficulty in accepting their contributions. I always marvel at the volunteer plants and I hope to let their spirit rule as we approach spring and another boating season.

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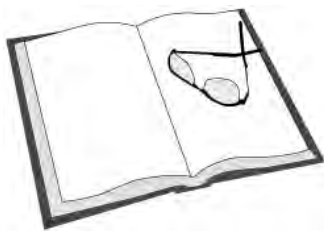
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Most, if not all, voyages begin as voyages of the imagination. You have to imagine it before you can go and do it. Some of us go on to do those "Great Adventures," but for most of us circumstances, money, distance or time get in the way of carrying through with those imagined voyages. For me, landlocked in the American Midwest, some of those voyages that are presently and firmly marooned beyond the realm of the possible lay in the Thames Estuary, Norfolk Broads and east coast of England. My access to that world is entirely literary.

Fortunately for me there is a long tradition of writing about small boat adventuring in that part of the world. Two of the best books to come out of that tradition in recent years have been *In Shoal Waters*, by Charles Stock, and *Sea-Country*, by Tony Smith, both published by Lodestar Books (more about them later).

An unwritten "rule" of book reviewing is that the reviewer reviews one book at a time, in this case you get two books which are connected not just by shared locale, but also connected by a single boat, *Shoal Waters*, which passes from Stock to Smith when the former surrenders to the inevitable march of age. Stock purchased a bare Fairey Falcon hull in 1963, finished it out with gear salvaged from his first boat and sailed her

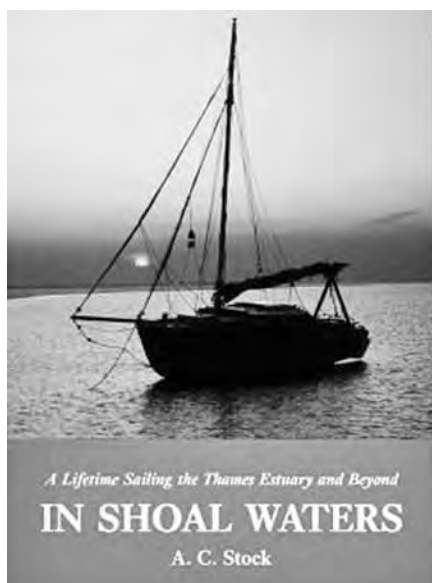


Book Reviews

In Shoal Waters: A Lifetime Sailing the Thames Estuary and Beyond

By A.C. Stock
Lodestar Books, London: 2013

Reviewed by John Nystrom



most of the rest of his life before selling her to his younger friend Smith.

Shoal Waters is essentially a creature of the East Coast marshlands where her 12" draft with the plate up and the ability to lower the mast easily enable her to get beyond the reach of other craft (p 161).

In Shoal Waters can be described as a nautical biography, starting with naval service near the end of WWII and working through a lifetime of sailing his home waters of the Thames Estuary on a very modest budget. Besides providing a wealth of information on sailing the eastern coastal area of England, and the vicissitudes of boating in tidal estuaries and littorals, Stock is an entertaining writer and the book deserves to become a minor classic of small boat sailing.

I'm trying to get a copy of Stock's earlier book, *Sailing Just For Fun* (a combination philosophy of minimalist sailing and cruising, construction and outfitting of his boat *Shoal Waters* and folksy guide to sailing the Thames Estuary) but the book has a different publisher and isn't exactly common on our side of the Atlantic.

At age 82, in 2010, Stock's failing health forced retirement from sailing and *Shoal Waters* was sold to Tony Smith, who blogs as "Creeksailor" <http://creeksailor.blogspot.com/>.

Smith is apparently keeping a page dedicated to Charles Stock alive, that links to several videos of Stock and *Shoal Waters* <http://shoal-waters.moonfruit.com/home-page/4513741672>.

In Shoal Waters seems to have been published by another press shortly after Stock passed away and went quickly out of print. Fortunately the book was rescued by Lodestar Books, <http://lodestarbooks.com>. Lodestar is a self described publisher of "new and neglected nautical writing." Though Anglo-centric, their selection of works is interesting to those who follow small boat sailing, both contemporary and historical, and nautical history. Their books are of extraordinary quality and beauty and "a bargain at twice the price!" (My enthusiasm for Lodestar Books is not only for their content but because I love a beautiful book as much as I love a beautiful and functional boat!)

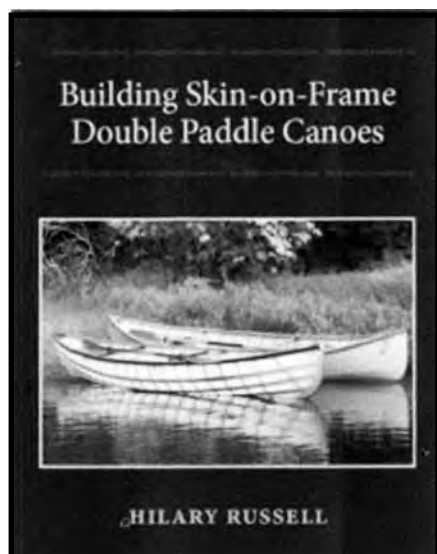
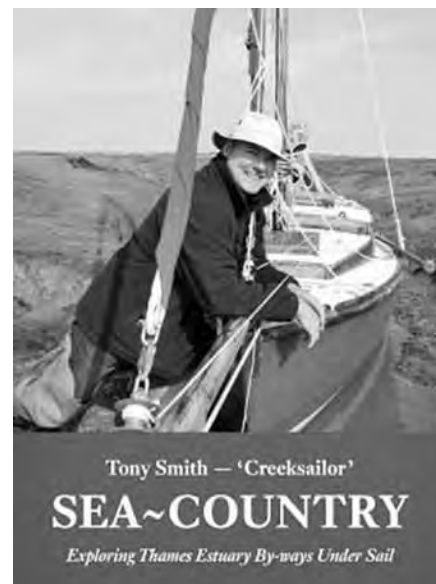
Tony Smith's writing style, though different from Stock's, is every bit as entertaining. Though the content derives from his Creeksailor blog, this book is a splendid example of the advantages of the printed book over electronic media. While the book can't match a blog for quickly getting the message out to an audience, the extra time and editing make for a more satisfying final product. Being derived from the online version, *Sea-Country* is more extensively illustrated than other sailing narratives I've read recently.

To sum up, these are both interesting reads of interest to small boat sailors and cruisers, fans of shallow water sailing and those looking to see if boating can be done on modest budget. Several outlets in the US are now carrying at least some Lodestar published books, including *Small Craft Advisor* and *WoodenBoat*, so check their websites after asking if your local bookstore can get them (I'm still trying to keep the local bookstore in business in an age of web commerce) and don't neglect to look at Lodestar's website to see what they currently have available.

Both titles available from *Small Craft Advisor* at (800) 979-1930.

Sea-Country: Exploring Thames Estuary By-ways Under Sail

By Tony Smith – 'Creeksailor'
Lodestar Books: London, 2014



A valuable book for building any skin-on-frame canoe, kayak, or rowboat. Plus the chapter on using willow for ribs connects ancient techniques with modern materials and design.

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The North Atlantic Ocean offers endless possibilities for apprehension. When cruising on the western shore of Lake Michigan, the fact that Michigan is 50 to 90 miles away is a cause of anxiety. But once in the Atlantic the miles morph from the tens to the thousands. This increase in distance is palpable in the way *Carrie Rose* rides the waves. Unseen or even unheard of storms affect the day's passage.

Six to eight miles offshore the swell, which in my Atlantic experience has been from the SE, begins to pick up the boat's rear and send it rushing down an extra knot or so. The wave's peak eventually catches up to the boat and, with a whoosh, passes under the keel. Now the boat's forward motion is slowed as the aft sinks into the trough and then the process begins again.

Waves develop in patterns. About every seventh wave on the Great Lakes is larger with an occasional one being totally out of proportion. Think minuscule rogue wave. It is impressive and elicits a hoot and a holler from the crew. These waves are the exclamation point of the journey. At one moment we are amongst the waves and then suddenly the waves are amongst us, either on the crest with distant views of breaking white caps or below in the troughs surrounded by walls of dark blue water.

At some point it is time to head for shore. With the push of a couple of buttons the autopilot alters course. The boat's motion takes on a different feel and several times this year the combination of wind and waves conspired to make me queasy. It does not last long though because the sea state is in constant change as Maine's jagged coast manipulates the surface of the ocean.

It is not a simple task to approach the final destination. Many waypoints need to be meticulously followed since, for the most

America the Beautiful

By Dean Raffaelli

part, over the last seven years of cruising every destination is unique. Islands (both seen and unseen), bays, reefs, mountains and tides and currents influence *Carrie Rose's* path to a slip, mooring or anchorage.

Each destination requires a different mindset. Different switches, lines, fenders and gear need to be readied. Different tomes need to be reviewed. And different levels of trepidation inform the procedure. Charlotte and I have become adept at this, needing few words to set the plan in motion. Of course, the plan is in constant review. Even after the boat is secured and the engine turned off the process continues.

If we are anchored I will take the next half hour to listen to the weather radio, observe landmarks, enter the Lat/Long into the log, set the GPS on anchor watch and second guess myself as to where I chose to drop the hook. This can be exhausting.

If on a slip, I adjust the lines and walk the docks to observe how the locals are attached. If they have extra lines, I will come back and do the same for every harbor has its own idiosyncrasies only known to the natives. This saved us much grief.

Moorings are a different story. Though easier than both of the above, they require faith in the unknown. A mooring is made up of numerous fittings, all prone to failure if not maintained properly. It is a calculated risk, as most cruising is after all. We trust that all will be well. This saved us many sleepless nights.

I started to write about the different Amer-

icas we encountered in the thousand miles from Kent Island, Maryland, to Herrick Bay, Maine. About the people we met, the food and the culture we experienced, the nature and city landscapes we glided by, that is, about America the Beautiful, but I was swept up in the details, so be it.

Sequel

It only took 1,000 nautical miles to go from shallow mud and heat to deep granite and cold. Somewhere in those miles we crossed the crustacean differentiation line passing from blue crabs to green lobsters. The boats morphed from skinny to wide and the buoys from a hodgepodge to a constant presence. *Carrie Rose* went from heading north to heading down east. The language changed but I am not a good enough writer to describe it.

The geography aged, the further north (with a few exceptions) the older and more interesting. Flat salt marshes barely holding their heads out of the rising sea slowly transformed into a tree lined rocky coast covered in moss and lichen and, unlike the southern realms, this northern mountainous landscape will require millions of years to erode. South in the heat folk were polite if not a bit edgy. Mid trip in the lands of New Jersey and southern New York an infectious nervous energy developed. We basked in the instant familiarity and joy that was exhibited to us for the fact of having enough nerve to show up in a boat from Chicago.

Maine has a more reserved population. They are going along how they have always gone along and will continue to with or without us. It seems they would be just as happy to be left alone as long as the world continues to buy their lobsters. *Carrie Rose* floats through these communities untethered. It is a liberating feeling. When we pack up and head home for another winter of family, friends and culture it is usually about time and brings no regrets.



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Hudson River Maritime Museum

Riverport Wooden Boat School | Riverport Sailing & Rowing School

KINGSTON, NEW YORK

It seems far from memory now, but the Rondout waterfront of Kingston, New York, was once a working waterfront. What are now walking paths, parks and cultural centers were once shipyards, commercial docks and shipping piers. Situated on a tributary to the Hudson River, the Rondout Creek provides a natural port due to its deep water and sheltered location nearly midway between Albany, the state capital, and New York City. It was home to a once booming shipbuilding industry that seemed to vanish by the mid 20th century.

Although the shipbuilding industries on the Hudson declined, the wooden boats remained. The gaff rigged racing sloop *Eleanor*, one of the last of her kind, survives from 1903. Built at the B.F. Wood shipyard at City Island, Bronx, *Eleanor* was designed by Clinton H. Crane, designer of the schooner *Endymion* (1900), which set a record for the Atlantic crossing in 13 days, eight hours, a record beaten in 1905 by *Atlantic*. She was saved by Hudson River Historic Boat Restoration and Sailing, Inc., an all volunteer organization in Hudson, New York, working to restore *Eleanor* to her former glory.

Eleanor is not the only wooden boat in need of restoration these days. In 2016 the Hudson River Maritime Museum opened the Riverport Wooden Boat School and with it Riverport Wooden Boat Restoration. Since 2016 RWBR has completed restorations of the *Clearwater*, *Woody Guthrie*, *Commander*, *Tid Bit* and are completing a scratch build of the 100% solar powered *Solar Sal*. These restorations were open to the public and, along with woodworking and boat building classes for youth and adults, the Hudson River Maritime Museum has transformed the Rondout into a working waterfront once again.

To celebrate the success of the Riverport Wooden Boat School and the resurgence of interest in the ships of the River and their restoration, the Hudson River Maritime Museum presented "Keeping History Afloat on the Hudson," a unique peer to-peer symposium on the technical aspects of boat restorations in the Hudson Valley, on March 24 at the Kingston Home Port & Education Center (affectionately known as "the Barn").

"Keeping History Afloat" was designed for professional and avocational shipwrights and restorers as well as wooden boat enthusiasts, this symposium featured presentations from a variety of shipwrights, restoration specialists and visionaries on the future of boats on the Hudson River. The focus of these presentations covered the technical details of the restoration and construction work for each vessel as well as the successes and challenges of each project. "Keeping History Afloat" featured the stories, restorations and builds of at least six Hudson River vessels, all of which kept tradition of wooden boats and shipbuilding alive on the river.

Keeping History Afloat on the Hudson A Boat Building and Restoration Symposium

The Rondout's long history of wooden boat building made it the perfect location for this unique event. Starting with the opening of the Delaware & Hudson Canal in 1828, Rondout became a center of wooden barge building to serve both the canal and making the larger barges needed to tow goods by steamboat down to New York City. During the World Wars of the early 20th century, shipbuilders of the Rondout assisted the American war effort by building freighters, tugs, submarine chasers, lighters and barges. To combat the use of magnetic mines, Rondout shipbuilders provided the United States with wooden boats to clear minefields. During the post WWII period, however, the old industries left the region and the use of trains, trucks and planes to transport people and goods became more cost effective.

Today the spirit of wooden boat building lives on in the original and replica vessels that continue to ply the Hudson River. The Hudson River Sloop *Clearwater*, a replica of the original Hudson River sloops that sailed up and down the river in the 18th and 19th centuries, was launched in 1969 and is nearing her 50th birthday. Designed for the variable winds and currents of the Hudson River, *Clearwater* and her crew continue the legacy of founder Pete Seeger who built the boat to save the river.

She became America's Environmental Flagship and was among the first vessels in the United States to conduct science based environmental education aboard a sailing ship, creating the template for environmental education programs around the world. More than half a million people have experienced their first real look at the Hudson River estuary's ecosystem aboard *Clearwater*. Added to the National Register of Historic Places with special dispensation for historic significance at just 35 years old (rather than the normal 50 year designation), *Clearwater* has undergone several stages of restoration in the last ten years, completing the last leg of work on the midships' hull in 2016.

Hudson River Sloop Clearwater



Riverport Wooden Boat School Director and experienced shipwright and millwright, Jim Kricker, discussed the most recent major restoration of the *Clearwater*. Kricker focussed on the *Clearwater*'s hull restoration, including the replacement of roughly 50 frames on each side with approximately 250 futtocks around 2,000 lineal feet of planking, the stem knee, horn timber, stern post, rudder post, some sections of deadwood, the engine beds, keel bolts and the complete replacement of the centerboard trunk, including a section of the keelson. The first ship to be restored at the Riverport Wooden Boat School, the *Clearwater* restoration marked the return of wooden boat building to the Rondout waterfront.

The second major restoration project done on the historic Rondout Creek was for the Beacon Sloop Club's 1978 Hudson River Ferry Sloop, *Woody Guthrie*. Beacon Sloop Club sailors and restoration volunteers Alan Thomas and James Malchow discussed the major overhaul of the ship by Riverport Wooden Boat Restorations. This project was unique as it offered volunteers from the Beacon Sloop Club and the museum to work alongside professional shipwrights, reducing labor costs for the all volunteer club and allowing for a full schedule of restoration work.



Woody Guthrie

Louise Bliss, President of the nonprofit Hudson River Historic Boat Restoration and Sailing, Inc., discussed the ongoing restoration of the historic 1903 raceabout sailing sloop *Eleanor*. In her presentation, Bliss discussed the restoration of *Eleanor*'s spars and the work of HRHBRS volunteers thus far.

Eleanor



Richard Scarano, Vice President of Scarano Boat Building, discussed the history of Scarano's restoration services and highlighted some of their most recent restoration projects. Founded in 1974, Scarano Boat Building designs and builds period wood, aluminum, composite and steel boats, Coast Guard certified for public transportation and excursions. Richard Scarano joined his brother in 1986 when Scarano Boat Building incorporated. They are known for the historic replicas of canal and sailboats. Past projects have included the *America*, a full scale replica of the famed 19th century racing schooner; *Santa Maria*, a replica of Columbus' 15th century carvel; and *Friendship of Salem*, a replica of a 171' three masted Salem East Indiaman originally built in 1797.

Historic and replica ships play a crucial role in keeping history afloat and alive on the Hudson River, but new uses for old boats and new types of boats are also being prototyped and tested on the Rondout waterfront. For two of our presenters boats represented not the past, but the future of transportation.

Sam Merrett is a marine diesel mechanic, US Coast Guard licensed captain and alternative fuel business owner. For him, the future of boats on the Hudson includes the revitalization of sail freight. At "Keeping History Afloat" Merrett discussed the restoration of the steel hulled 1945 schooner *Apollonia* and her conversion to sail freight. Relying on her



Apollonia's Rig

sails, *Apollonia* will also use alternative fuel made from recycled cooking oil in her 1953 diesel engine as she plies the Hudson, moving freight from place to place. Merrett's goal is to make *Apollonia* a reproducible model for sail freight.

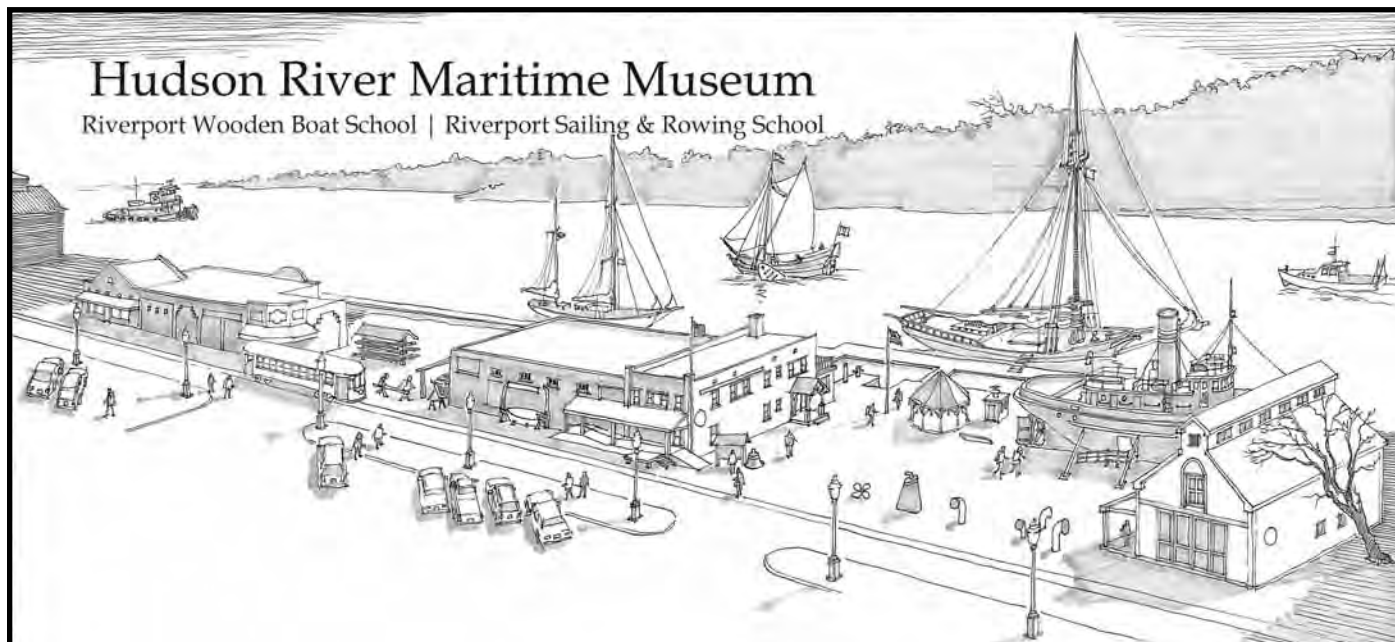
For one man the future of transportation lies not with the wind, but with the sun. PhD physicist and sustainable energy expert David Borton presented the scratch build of the *Solar Sal*, a 100% solar powered motor vessel designed to be a US Coast Guard inspected commercial passenger boat. Borton's design was brought to life by the shipwrights of Riverport Wooden Boat Restorations. At 44' long, *Solar Sal* brings solar energy, electricity and marine propulsion together to help revolutionize river transportation.

"Keeping History Afloat on the Hudson River" was a day long event based around

30-40 minute presentations with audience Q&A and featured a round table discussion, the first of many regional meetings bringing together the diverse interests of members of this community to discuss not just boat building and restoration, but the logistics of moving freight and passengers in a "post carbon" world when wind and solar power will keep communities connected, provide training and jobs in forest management, solar electric propulsion, woodworking, seafaring, sail making, rigging and alongshore logistics.

Today the Rondout Waterfront connects the city of Kingston not only to the River, but to its past. Skilled shipwrights and volunteers train the next generation of wooden boat builders so that these beautiful sailing vessels continue to sail the Hudson River, keeping the romance of sail travel alive. Through woodworking classes, sailing workshops, rowing workshops, lectures and exhibits, the Hudson River Maritime Museum preserves the tradition of its community and inspires a respect for the river that connects us all.

(About the Hudson River Maritime Museum: Located along the historic Rondout Creek in downtown Kingston, New York, the Hudson River Maritime Museum is a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of the maritime history of the Hudson River, its tributaries and related industries. HRMM opened the Riverport Wooden Boat School in 2016 and the Riverport Sailing School in 2017.



When I was nine years old my father chartered a catboat in Maine from a local boatyard. My memory of that sail is vague but my family reminds me of it because many years later I would become a catboat builder. The following story is how that happened.

My father brought my brother, sister and I up sailing sloops in the early 1960s. He would strap my brother and me below his 28' Kings Cruiser sloop when we were two and three years old and set sail for Maine from Plymouth, Massachusetts. In our early years of elementary school he purchased a secondhand 32' fiberglass ketch after his Kings Cruiser was lost in a hurricane. A few years later he was able to buy the boat of his dreams, a used 42' shoal draft, wooden ketch.

All along he had set goals to learn all he could about sailing offshore and exploring ports he dreamt of or read about in the stacks of *National Geographic* in our home. So the journey began. All school vacations were sailing trips. We sailed south in the fall and north in the spring by way of the inner coastal waterway and eventually made our way offshore. This was training for my father's ultimate goal of sailing with his family around the world.

So, like many kids with sailing parents, my destiny was written at an early age. Learn to love to sail. I am very grateful for the experiences my father shared with us and the trips I had as his crew or as skipper on his and other boats. There were many learning experiences that for a young kid became a way of life. The following is a random stream of sailing memories.

Many offshore trips to the Bahamas, six years cruising the Bahamas in the early '70s, surviving two serious lightning strikes while anchored, one harrowing night in a lightning storm underway in thick fog, tossing stored extra fuel over the side, countless squall lines with winds gusting 50 knots or more, snowstorms at sea, frozen decks, crew members vomiting all over themselves and the boat, crew members curled up in a ball hard against a lee cloth reciting the Lord's Prayer while in a gale, riding out a hurricane in the Azores chained to a harbor buoy because the holding ground was so poor, experiencing a full gale off Hatteras.

Bartering a bottle of whiskey with a village chief in Gambia, Africa, for the use of his motorcycle and then heading off into the forest to Dakar, Senegal, looking for a part we needed, being mobbed by young villagers who had never seen a white person, a full on knockdown 120 miles offshore on a racing yacht, unsure for a moment if she would come back as we hung in the water from our harnesses. Many groundings and nights spent on sand bars.

Making landfall into the port of Crooks-Haven, Ireland, in pea soup fog, having left the Azores 11 days earlier with the wrong charts, only a road map to get us in safely, our rental car stolen by the IRA and then hitch hiking and sleeping by the side of the road trying to get from Dublin back to the boat, going overboard while underway in the frigid cold Irish sea to free up a fishing line that had wrapped around the prop.

On a number of occasions having to climb the mainmast in a storm to retrieve a lost halyard, slipping over the side from a freak wave in the middle of the night while changing a sail in the south Atlantic, the safety harness allowing me to pull myself back aboard, feeling like I was going to die

My Second Sail in a Catboat

By Tony Davis

after leaving the Verde Islands with food poisoning that hit me after we were underway, coming within feet of hitting a reef on a late night landfall off Grand Bahama in strong winds and following seas (we accidentally mistook a range light for a light in a beach shack), many fire drills when squalls came through a crowded anchorage in the dark of night, boats dragging into other boats and banging and colliding as a wall of rocks or a beach would be our landing if we did not act quickly untangling the anchor rode.

A full gale in the Gulf of Maine returning from Nova Scotia in a wooden 120' schooner, three reefs in the main and a reef in the fore doing 11 knots in a following sea, nearly missing the Galapagos Islands due to a navigational error. Being in the engine room in a full gale, checking the transmission because it was getting hot from the prop freely spinning as we raced down the waves and then in horror seeing the shaft get so hot that it released from the transmission, instantly expecting to be sinking within seconds, ordering the crew to grab the wooden plugs to fill the shaft log, miraculously the shaft stopped, saved by the shaft zinc, securing against the shaft strut.

While trade wind sailing in 20 knots of breeze sadly hitting a sleeping whale, sending a shudder through the wooden boat that concerned everyone that there might be a major leak, but there wasn't, my father never checking the weather forecast before heading out on a trip, he felt if he did there would be good chance we would not go and that would mess up his schedule juggling work and sailing time. Rebuilding motor parts for the engine and systems the best we could on beaches and in random island villages in remote places that had no service or parts.

A wild flight aboard a twin prop plane flying to a key in the Bahamas from Florida where the boat had been left. The pilot halfway into the flight told us we were over the weight limit and going down if we did not toss our gear out of the plane to lighten her up. We did and later learned the plane was loaded with contraband, the pilot had not calculated all our provisioning we had brought from the States, on another trip the charter flight company put us in a seaplane to get us to where we had left the boat and upon landing the plane started to sink.

Breaking my nose when going forward to secure a loose anchor as the boat lifted from a sea, I lost my grip and was tossed into the air landing on the deck nose first, blood splattered everywhere, keeping a loaded shotgun aboard and practicing to use it when at sea in the event we were to be boarded by pirates, returning to the boat after leaving her in Turks and Caicos for three months to find she had been stripped clean of all our valuable gear by thieves, being boarded by custom agents with guns drawn in Agadier, Africa and having our passports taken and sensing if we did not give the agents all our liquor or whatever they wanted we were not getting out of there in one piece.

Letting the crew down when a serious squall line came through while crossing the English Channel and after we dug in and

sailed through the squall we realized we lost a bagged working jib over the side, which I was supposed to have secured properly before the weather.

Then there are also the not so dramatic memories. Tradewind passages that go well, endless beautiful sunrises and sunsets, moonrise and sets, catching fish with ease for dinner, working with the stars above to confirm our course, expecting and planning for the slow moving weather days, taking advantage to do repairs and boat keeping duties, experiencing the doldrums or days of flat calm hundreds of miles from land, watching all the life below the surface coming and going, dolphins, porpoises, whales, sharks, turtles and birds and the occasional bird that hitches a ride because it is tired, the flying fish all over the deck after a night of sailing to windward.

Staring over the side at night being mesmerized by the phosphorescent lights, the symphony of sounds as we lay in our bunks listening to the wooden boat in motion, the waves interrupted by the hull working her way through them, the spectacular landfalls, sighting land on the far horizon and thinking I am happiest at sea and would prefer to let the land go by.

Learning the culture of the people of the new island or continent, their habitat and the beauty of the their way of life, diving on reefs and swimming in crystal clear water, the shore parties after a long passage, the satisfaction we got after hours of work, cleaning, fixing, polishing, varnishing and painting the boat to keep her safe and seaworthy, receiving gifts, like a live chicken from a village chief who expected us to slaughter it and eat it, instead we made it our pet and named it Dinner and it ran loose around the boat.

Provisioning and the fun adventures those can turn into when trying to find a ride and the provisions we need, the bonding amongst the crew, hours on watch and the conversations that ensue, the friendships that develop that last a lifetime, the teamwork that makes a potentially bad situation ultimately work out because everyone knew their job and worked together, the appreciation of living in close quarters and learning to respect each other's space and care for their needs and wants, learning to avoid confrontation through patience when situations are tough and personalities are clashing, learning to be diplomatic and expecting everyone to carry equal weight, the times we are in our bunk exhausted and think we have another hour or two of rest and hear "sail change, all hands on deck." Then jumping to get there.

All of this would not have been possible without a father who had a dream as a young man to travel the world by boat and share the experiences with his family. For me it was extra special because I learned that the tough side of my father was intended to make me a better person. In hindsight, I now realize that some of the more difficult moments we had were meant to be building blocks for me to mature and grow at sea by way of many meaningful and rewarding experiences.

There are many more stories I experienced with my father, and on other boats, that made sailing seem like a big wild adventure. But it was how I was brought up to sail, expecting the unexpected at all times, that's what made the trips unique. When I was 22 years old, almost all of these experiences were in my past and a new opportunity was offered to me, to learn the trade of building a wooden boat.

I took the offer and settled in Maine for four years. I worked side by side with Arno Day, a true master of his craft, as his apprentice. When the apprenticeship ended I sailed south in a 28' cutter Arno and I built together. I earned a living working in various boatyards as far south as Long Island. Eventually, I ended up in the Charlestown Navy Yard in Boston building boats, settled down and started a family. After three years in Boston my wife and I realized the city was not for us so we started looking for a boat building business.

A good friend I had met on the 120' schooner I crewed for (who was a fifth generation Cape Codder) insisted, if I could get the financing, I should buy a boatyard in Orleans, Massachusetts, located on a beautiful bay with ocean access that had just come on the market. The year was 1989, I was 29 and ready to commit to building a business. So we visited the boatyard and the owners were very nice and showed my wife, Robin, and me around.

On one of our visits, the owners suggested I take their personal 14' catboat for a sail on the bay. I agreed and headed out alone on an exceptionally beautiful day. The only singlehanded small boat experience I had at this point in my life was sailing a 12' foot Cape Dory skiff from time to time in Maine when I was very young. I had no experience with a gaff rig and had been bitten by the myth that catboats were slow and could not sail to windward so I was not expecting much of a sail.

I used the outboard to get down a beautiful river and soon set sail, I fumbled with the halyards trying to figure out what was what, but eventually I was underway. I kept trying to get the boat to heel over and point so I would tighten the sheet line. When I did that the boat would stall, she was not happy. I eased the sheet and let the sail fill, the rig relaxed, the sail filled with a pocket in the forward third of the sail and she began to move through the water like I wasn't aboard. I sailed through this narrow spit of water separating a small bay from a bigger bay. It was challenging, beating into a southwest breeze that was building and kept me heading deeper into the bigger bay.

With each tack and little adjustment to the halyards, I began to understand the rig. I also began to relax. There was an incredible sense of security on this little boat, between the wide beam and rugged rig. I felt completely at ease. The boat was pointing to windward just fine. The waves grew bigger in the big bay, the little catboat was in her space, she would dig into each wave. The spray coming over the bow gave the small boat sailing experience a big boat feel. Being so close to the water, I was learning a whole new way to appreciate sailing.

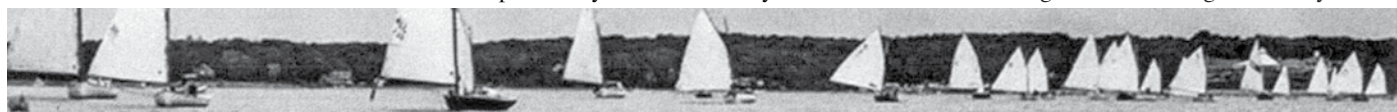
When it was time to head back the wind was getting lighter but it was a run back to the river. I had the mainsheet all the way out and the boom 90° to the mast, a little belly in the sail. I lay down on the bench seat and stared up at the crystal clear blue sky with a hand on

the tiller. I felt totally at peace. The centerboard was up and the tide was going out and the little cat skated over 10" of water with ease. I was surrounded by land with very little water under me.

What was happening? I thought. What have I missed? Is this sailing? When I got back to the boatyard and returned the boat to the owner, I thanked him for the experience. I told him some words of wisdom a boat-builder named Joel White told me when he knew I wanted to leave Maine to build boats. He said, "Remember, wherever you end up, the best boat to design and build are the boats that fit the waters you are sailing in."

As days went by I could not get that catboat sail out of my head. The memory of that sunlit sky, the shallow water that was so clear and clean, sailing flat and fast, the horseshoe crabs skirting about the sand as the boat approached them. It was as if the boat was taking me for a sail. It all seemed so simple in comparison to my years of sailing offshore, debating sail combinations on a sloop, cutter, schooner, ketch or yawl. When my short daysail was over, I still felt the same energy and adrenaline high that I felt following an offshore experience. I was hooked on small boat sailing, something I had missed in my childhood.

One and half years later, in 1991, we closed on our Arey's Boatyard Boatyard. To this day my team and I design and build catboats and other small shoal draft designs and I never get tired of sailing on that bay.



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The Lifeboat Disaster of 1886

Reprinted from *Dinghy Cruising*

Journal of the Dinghy Cruising Association UK

and its lasting influence

Pt III: Heroism and Disaster –The End of the *Laura Janet*

ANYONE WHO STUDIES the *Mexico* disaster is soon faced with the shocking verdict that was visited on the *Laura Janet*'s crew, delivered officially in a court of enquiry – to its shame – only a week after their deaths.

Apparently the Coxswain William Johnson (35) was in the last stages of consumption (tuberculosis), and had been given only three months to live. A crewman, Thomas Bonney (35) had eaten no more than a dish of gruel on the 9th of December, before being called out to spend his last desperate hours fighting monstrous seas in freezing sleet and snow, perishing at last with the rest of the crew miles out in the Ribble Estuary.

Others in the boat crew had been suffering similarly from malnutrition – allegedly. Some were inexperienced and had only attended a practice or two. In short, although the boat was kept in peak condition, and had been

"O, I have suffer'd
With those that I saw suffer : a brave vessel,
Who had, no doubt, some noble creatures in her,
Dash'd all to pieces. O, the cry did knock
Against my very heart."

The Tempest, Act I Scene II, William Shakespeare

overseen properly by the local inspector of lifeboats, it was a pity that a healthy and capable crew could not be mustered to man her. All that could be said about them – admittedly quite a lot, under the circumstances – was that they had boundless courage ...

This tissue of lies, innuendo and exaggeration has tarnished the reputation of the St Annes lifeboatmen over the past 161 years and is likely to continue to do so, because everyone seems to accept it as the simple truth – after all, a Special Enquiry was held by the Board of Trade in partnership with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, so surely it was conducted in exemplary fashion. Certainly it would be a scandal if this were not the case ...

My suspicions were aroused when I read how the County Coroner, Mr S. Brighthouse, influenced the jury in the second hearing of the Inquest on December 18th. (The first one a week earlier had been wholly taken up with the identification of the 25 bodies taken from the shoreline on the previous morning, the 10th, and shortly afterwards.) Strangely, the Special Enquiry had proceeded apace *before* the Inquest had finished, on the 13th and 15th December, beginning just three days after the catastrophe. A rushed job, then.

Brighthouse told his 14-man jury that the correct verdict was so obvious they needed no direction from him (thus pointing them straight at the conclusion he

Laura Janet and her crew of thirteen. Dimensions: LOA 34ft 7ins (10.54 metres), Beam 8ft 4ins (2.54 metres), Depth 3ft 6 ins (1.09 metres). Built in 1881. Tested for self-righting on station. Most of her crew had a good record and all but three of them had been out to Salthouse Bank on Saturday, December 4th, just five days before the *Mexico* service, to save the five-man crew of a sunken steamer in stormy weather. Standing in her (left) are Cox William Johnson (35) and Sub-Cox Charles Tims (43). Bowman Oliver Hodson (39) is standing at extreme right. This is the day St Annes Pier was opened in 1885.



wanted them to reach), but he also pressed them to use this occasion as a public forum for their detailed thoughts on how the safety and efficiency of the local lifeboat service might be improved.

It took them only 35 minutes, 45 at most, to arrive at a verdict of 'Death by Misadventure', and for their foreman to proceed

'... at length to suggest improvements to the lifeboat service. Blame was not attributed to anyone, they said, but the service was found to fall short of that security which should distinguish it. There was abundant material for further investigation, and the jury made special recommendations.'

There were seven main points, the majority of them sensible enough.

It is likely that Brighthouse had discussed everything with the jury in private beforehand – 35 minutes being far too little time to decide on a verdict and come up with seven well reasoned recommendations.

This, plus his insistence on a verdict of Death by Misadventure, and the jury's assertion that no individuals were to be blamed, strikes me as being a reaction to the findings of the Enquiry, in which blame was attached with a vengeance by Sir Digby Murray, its Board of Trade Chairman, with the Hon HW Chetwynd, RN, Chief Inspector of Lifeboats, representing

the Lifeboat Institution and very much complicit in what was said.

Without revealing how the evidence had all been sourced in just the two days of the weekend following the disaster, Murray announced,

'We regret to have to state that, from evidence taken by us at St. Anne's and Lytham, we find that the Coxswain was physically unfit for the performance of so arduous and difficult a service, as he was ill with consumption, and was not expected, by his medical man, to last beyond the Spring. Two or three of the others were not strong men, and one poor fellow had only a basin of gruel all day, prior to proceeding on this service.'

In a breathtaking display of how to dispel the pressing need to look more closely into this matter, he rounded off his brief comments on the *Laura Janet* by saying:

'There was no-one in authority present at the launch of the boat, excepting the Coxswain, who was drowned, and, therefore, nobody alive is responsible either for the Coxswain, or any of the men, proceeding in the boat on this night, in an unfit condition. The Coxswain, according to the rules of the National Lifeboat Institution, is the person in authority at a launch on service ... We are unable, in consequence of the lack of evidence, to assign any reason for the loss of this boat.'

The first part of Murray's summary is a perfect example of what we call Catch 22 these days, and the last sentence is simply untrue. There was significant evidence, some of which was circumstantial, but some was objective and some resided in the words of witnesses taken immediately after the event, that gives a pretty good idea of how the *Laura Janet* ended her rescue attempt and the lives of the 13 crew, but Murray clearly wanted the buck to stop with the late and allegedly tubercular – and thus ineffectual – Coxswain.

(As you will see in our next issue, the crew of the *Eliza Fernley*, the Southport boat, were given a hard time by the Enquiry, too.)

The idea that someone in authority might have banned the *Laura Janet* from being launched because of the shortcomings of her crew would not, I think, have impressed the Captain of the *Yan Yean* five days previously. He found them far from being 'in an unfit condition' when they saved his crew and himself from certain death. In fact the Captain was present when the lifeboat was launched again later in the week in response to the *Mexico's* distress signals, and he was only with difficulty dissuaded from getting into the boat himself and taking an oar – what greater testimony could there be to prove this professional sailor's full confidence in the Cox, William Johnson?

The 'Medical Man' apparently lost no time in damning Johnson's good name forever in order to ingratiate himself with Sir Digby Murray, and, through him, with Lord Stanley, the 16th Earl of



(Left) The *Laura Janet* outside her boathouse in St Annes, about to be launched to attend the celebration of the opening of the St Annes Pier (1885). The lady in the hat with a white scarf wrapped around it to make it look more festive appears in all these photographs of *Laura Janet*, so confirming that they were all taken on this same day of celebration. The hulking figure in the stern is Sub-Cox Charles Tims; Cox William Johnson to the right



Lord Stanley, 16th Earl of Derby

Derby, the new President of the Board of Trade, to whom the Enquiry had to report. For all we know, Medical Man volunteered his opinion without being asked for it. As his was the only evidence given about Johnson's physical condition, I find it strange that he was not called as a witness, or

at the very least asked to supply his opinions as written evidence to be read out verbatim in court and properly placed on record. His qualifications, experience and position were not divulged either, it seems; he is referred to solely as Johnson's 'medical man' during the hearing.

After the night of December 9th-10th, 1886, the communities of St Annes, Lytham and especially Southport, found themselves to be the subjects of intense world scrutiny, which included the close interest taken by Kaiser Wilhelm I and Queen Victoria (as the *Mexico* was registered in Hamburg and her crew were German).

Apart from the possible exception of Lytham, whose lifeboat saved the crew, it was not really the kind of attention they wanted:

'The catastrophe which plunged St Annes and Southport into mourning constituted a record in disaster for our

lifeboat service, despite the fact that it had been at work for well over a century ...' *

Why the local gentry in these towns might have felt particularly vulnerable to scrutiny on this scale is a matter for us to consider. Suffice to say – for now – that the good burghers of Southport and the officials of the Enquiry seem to have gone pale at the prospect of their findings ending up on the desk of Lord Stanley.

Frederick Arthur Stanley became Lord Stanley of Preston and the President of the Board of Trade in 1886. He went on to become the sixth Governor-General of Canada two years later, where he is still respected as an athlete, equestrian, fisherman, and especially for his

* Major AJ Dawson, in *Britain's Lifeboats: The Story of a Century of Heroic Service*, publ.1923

A very trim, well kept *Laura Janet* is launched under oars to take part in celebrating the opening of St Annes Pier. She is flying outsize bunting as flags, which matches that on the pier itself.

Note the two details which connect this photograph with the others, the hat with white scarf worn by the lady in the right foreground, and the woollen 'bobble hats' worn by the crew. Boat colours would have been light blue topsides, white below the waterline, red or navy blue belting. Bow badge: 'National lifeboat Institution'. The *Mexico* was her sixth service



donation of the Stanley Cup for hockey – he is featured in their Hockey Hall of Fame. He was better known in England as the younger son of a three-time Prime Minister, Edward Stanley, and as the Conservative MP for Preston. He had also been a Colonel in the Grenadier Guards.

As with the *Charles Biggs*, there is a prologue to the story of the *Laura Janet*, and it has to be known in order to gauge the truth of her crew's ability and sense what probably happened to them on the Ribble banks.

Off St Annes on Saturday, December 4th, during a dark and threatening afternoon that conjured up a strengthening northeasterly to join the rising tide, something small and unrecognisable to the naked eye was spotted five miles out on the Salthouse Bank.

When glasses were trained on the object it turned into the mast of a vessel with five men clinging to it. The hull was stuck fast on

the sandbank and lay below them under the surface of the water. The men were now condemned to the torture of waiting until their frozen hands and legs failed to grip and they dropped off one by one into the winter sea.

Swimming through big breaking waves to the distant shore was an impossible undertaking for any swimmer, as he would be pounded to death immediately on the anvil of the sand beneath. The mast might be swept away at any moment, too, or the hull could disintegrate in the rising tide, in which case they would all die more or less simultaneously.

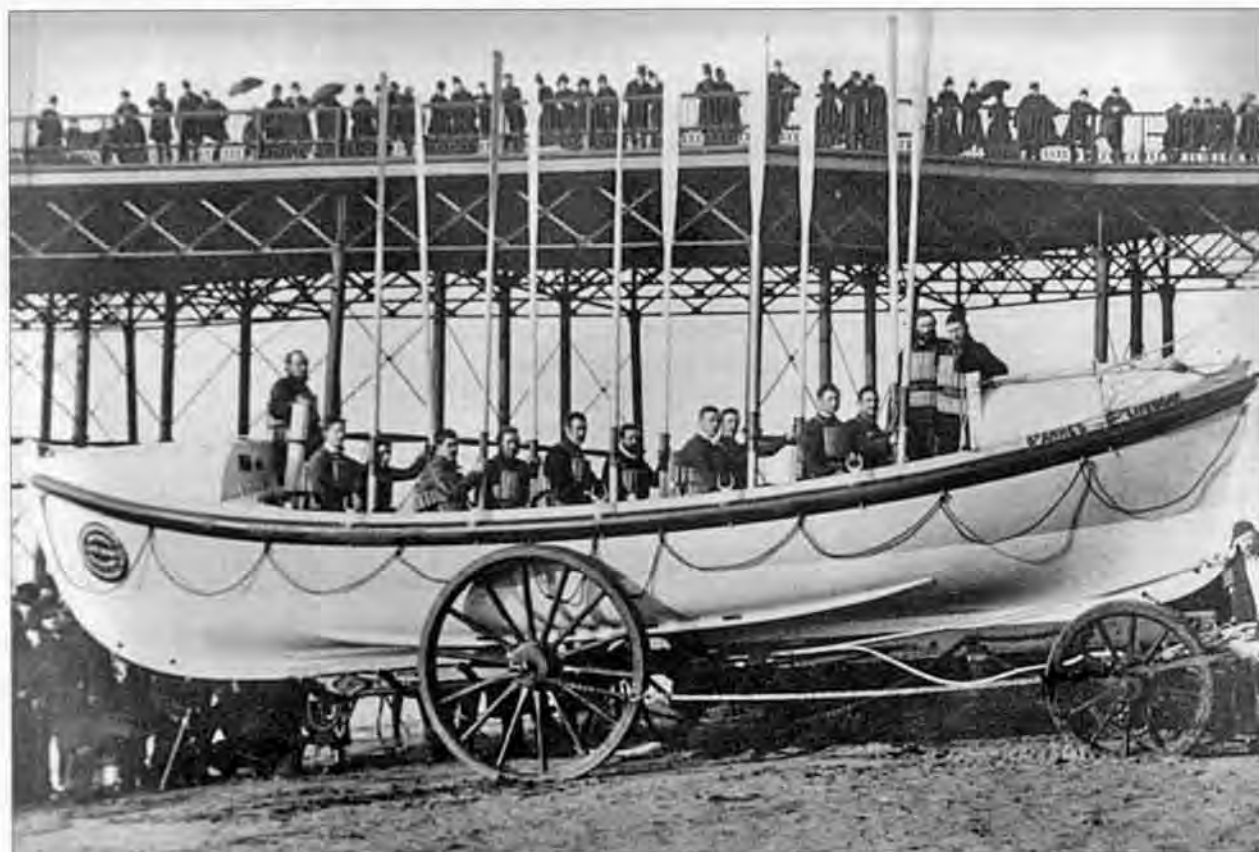
The skipper was the lowest of the five on the mast and his most immediate fear, more pressing than surviving the constant wetting and the wind chill, was how to keep breathing after each wave had swamped him, surging over his head and leaving him gasping, right up to the arrival of the next one.

The engineer had a different problem; he occupied the topmost position and suffered the constant buffeting of the wind as well as clouds of spray. He would soon be frozen to death or lose his grip as his hands and legs became useless, and then he would fall into the sea and drown. Between them were the three remaining crew, equally challenged in slightly different ways depending on their position up the length of the mast.

After the *Laura Janet* was launched in response to this emergency, her progress towards the wreck was slowed by the strong wind and the adverse flood tide. It was some hours before she returned to St Annes and beached in the surf with the five crew of the little steamer *Yan Yean* from Montrose safe on board.

That Saturday night the inhabitants of this little coastal resort held an amateur concert with happy hearts, as it had been planned to raise money for their lifeboat. While the evening's

This shot and the one opposite show what a red-letter day this was, marking the moment when St Annes-on-the-Sea embarked on its ultimately successful attempt to be reborn as a high-class, gentrified resort town of some consequence. Piers were a top status symbol in Victorian seaside towns, second only to good railway links, which St Annes already had. Eventually Lytham and St Annes merged, of course, as they expanded via ribbon development along the coast



entertainment progressed, the condition of the *Yan Yean's* crew was partly restored by a hot meal and a change of clothing. So much so, that they accepted an invitation and accompanied the triumphant lifeboat crew into the concert hall.

The Scots captain of the *Yan Yean* was no shrinking violet, and he held the audience spellbound when he mounted the stage and evoked the despair and physical torture of clinging to the mast of his little sunken steamer for hours, not daring to hope for the miracle of a vessel being launched in an attempt to save them. He had, he said, expected to spend that night in eternity, not at such an enjoyable social occasion as this one in St Annes.

In the words of Major AJ Dawson, who was a man of his time in his relish of sentimental purple prose:

'Never, surely, can an audience gathered together for an entertainment in aid of a philanthropic service have been given evidence more convincing, or more dramatic, of the need for that service, and of the urgency and need of its claims upon the support of every man and woman of goodwill.'

Also present that night was a famous resident of St Annes-on-the-Sea, as it was always called back then, Sir Charles Macara, who had bought a seaside home there two years earlier in 1884 as a place of refuge from his high-powered career in the city. We have now largely forgotten his major contributions to the development of modern Lancashire, and indeed to world politics generally, but he is still remembered as the man who revolutionised the finances and fund-raising of the Lifeboat Institution; he came up with the idea of 'Lifeboat Days', starting with 'Lifeboat Saturdays'. Moreover, he was always squarely on the side of the original inhabitants of St Annes-on-the-Sea, the fishermen and longshoremen and their families. He attended the concert and heard the captain's story: 'I shall not soon forget that night, nor the simple moving story

of wreck and rescue told by the Scottish master of that coasting vessel.'*

Macara was a Scot himself, the 'son of the Manse' of the Free Kirk, in Aberdeen. He was later to write that it was both rescues, the *Yan Yean's* and the *Mexico's* equally, which inspired him to take up the cause of RNLI funding.

The inimitable AJ Dawson later wrote:

'It is to be remembered that there was nothing of the fashionable watering-place about St Annes at that period. Hard-bitten, sea-booted fishermen were then more numerous than tourists or visitors from cities on the weather-beaten front of the little town; and Sir Charles Macara – himself a man born near the sea – speedily made himself a member of this community, and struck up real friendships with the fisher-folk. He had come to find relief from the pressure of affairs; but it was not in his nature to play a quiescent part, and within a very short time the obscure little town of his retreat had begun to add very materially to his labours and activities. Almost from the beginning he fell into the habit of putting out to sea with his friends among the fishermen. He studied the working of the local Lifeboat, and regularly took his place in it as one of its crew, on practice trips, round the banks of the Ribble Estuary.'

As soon as the concert ended, Macara rushed the Cox, William Johnson, and the Sub-Coxswain, Charles Tims, to the telephone at his house – the only one in the village, although they did have the benefit of the telegraph and a rail link, as did Lytham and, of course, Southport across the estuary, which was by this time very well blessed with telephones, rail links, a nearby canal, a first-rate hotel, an extremely long pier and other accoutrements of high-class modern life that were considered appropriate for a superior seaside resort in the late 19th century – or rather, some of its newly established residents were blessed with them. Others were too poor to benefit from any of these at all.

Macara wrote later, 'I was greatly moved, and after the concert I invited the Coxswain

and Sub-Coxswain to my house and induced them to describe their experience in their own words to the Manchester Press by telephone.'*

Their conversation was,

'...furnished with a moving record of seafaring in stress and storm, not in the familiar phrases and approved diction of journalism, but in the homely speech of men whose cruddled hands, while little suited to the pen, were inured to the touch of frozen hemp and the grip of salt-encrusted oars.'

(AJ Dawson again – who else?)

It would be entertaining, but not essential, to source the reports of the thrilling lifeboat rescue in the Manchester papers of Sunday and Monday, December 5th & 6th, 1886, if they still exist. They would certainly have been well known to all who attended the Inquest and the Special Enquiry a week later.

As Johnson and Timms left Sir Charles that night, they thanked him and remarked in passing that wrecks rarely came singly on their coast, and it wouldn't surprise them at all to receive another demand for their services soon. No doubt that convivial Saturday night had run its course by the time they left, making way for the early morning of Sunday December 5th – which was the day the *Mexico* set sail from Liverpool for South America with a general cargo and her crew of twelve.

Major AJ Dawson was writing around 1921, and his *Britain's Lifeboats: The Story of a Century of Heroic Service* was published in 1923 under the aegis of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, which had given him full access to their archives.

Obviously Charles Macara's interest in local lifeboats had been known to the Institution for the past two years, and they would have recognized him as a man of considerable reputation, a pillar of society, with a special interest in

* *Recollections*, by Sir Charles W Macara, Bart., pp 182-3.

the Ribble Estuary. Why, I wonder, was he not invited officially to give evidence to the Inquest and to the Special Enquiry?

He lived alongside the vilified members of the St Annes lifeboat crew and admired them greatly. And had he bore witness, what would he have had to say about the physical competence or otherwise of William Johnson to command the lifeboat? Macara does not strike me as being the sort of man to risk his own neck in a boat commanded by an enfeebled cox with only a few months to live, even if only on practice trips around the Estuary, let alone to allow him to continue in command and endanger his crew in a real service, without interfering actively to get him replaced; he simply was not that sort of person.

So five short winter days before the *Mexico* struck, we can say that William Johnson was equal to driving himself and his pony and trap at breakneck speed to St Annes, before piloting his lifeboat five miles out over the Salthouse Bank and five back in turbulent conditions, while effecting a

demanding rescue in bitterly cold weather and then later talking about it at length over the telephone following a lively social evening, without even getting out of breath or losing his high spirits. Not bad for a consumptive at the end of his tether; why wasn't this brought up later, too? If the *Yan Yean* was mentioned at all at the Enquiry, it was only in passing.

Medical Man had felt it was very important to state that Johnson was not physically up to managing the tiller of the lifeboat, a basic requirement for a Cox.

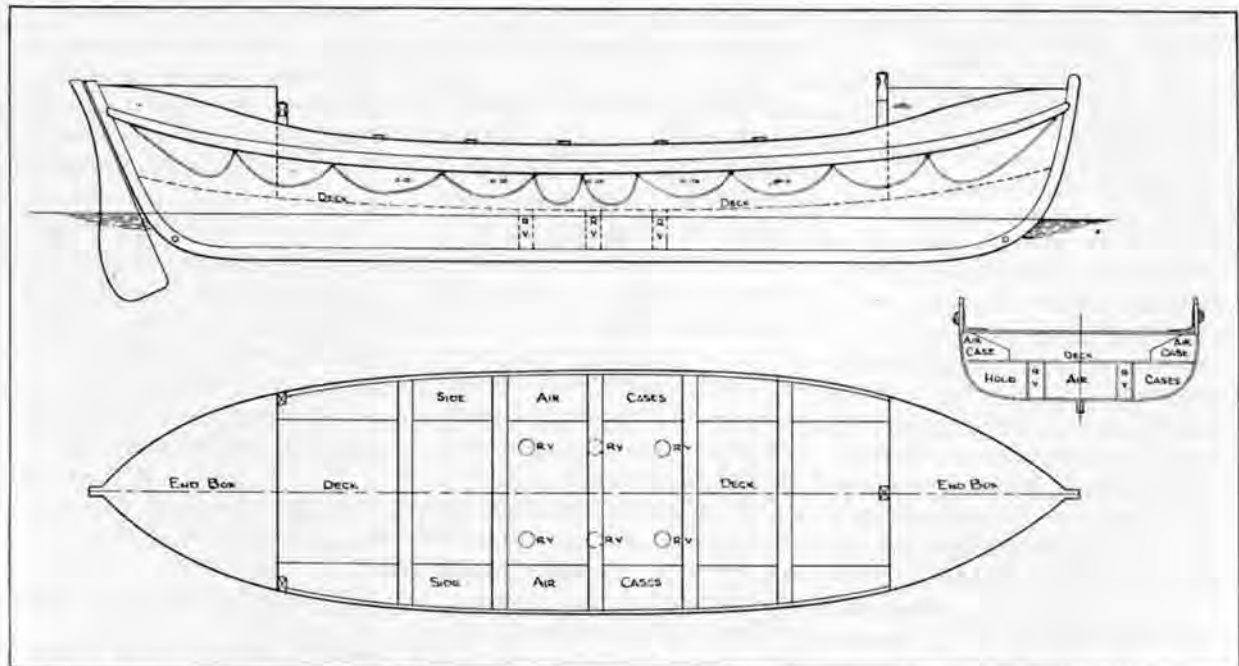
Call Sub-Coxswain Charles Timms (43) and his brother Reuben (30) to the stand for a moment. They came from Cambridgeshire originally. Charles had been in the Royal Navy and had sailed to Africa with David Livingstone. The brothers were religious – earnest Baptists. Both were expert fishermen with wide experience that covered different fisheries in different sorts of boats. Reuben had the drive and initiative to branch out a little and had become a fish dealer. In the photographs Charles is taller, broader and heavier than

William Johnson, who was quite tall himself, but slender. He gives every impression of being a tough, competent seaman of great experience, well able to handle the tiller for long periods if he had to.

Medical Man seems not to have been aware, though, that sail and oar lifeboats did not rely solely on a simple tiller, but had provision for a yoke with blocks and tackle on both sides for more than one man, if necessary, to control the rudder in heavy conditions. These are clearly in place on the *Laura Janet*, whose hull, incidentally, was obviously beautifully balanced, judging by the relatively small rudder, which suggests that she was light on the helm. No doubt Johnson could manage a two to one purchase well enough with one other to help, I should think.

(The eyes and take-off points for these tackles are still evident on the *Charles Henry Ashley* and are no doubt identical to the arrangement on the *Laura Janet*. The system could be reinstalled on the 1907 Watson very easily and quickly.)

The *Laura Janet*'s bowman was Oliver Hodson (39), who also



An 1863 Pulling Lifeboat. LOA 33ft, Breadth 8ft. Six relieving valves (RVs). Rowing ten oars, like the *Laura Janet*, also with a crew of 13, but 1ft 7ins shorter (48cms 3mm) and 4ins narrower (102mm). Flatter bottom with little deadrise. This boat was praised by the Lifeboat Institution at the time: 'This Lifeboat possesses in the highest degree all the qualities which it is desirable that a lifeboat should possess'. Like the *Laura Janet* (built 1881), it was out of date in 1886. No ballast, no flotation cases inside the raised ends, no drop keel, and relying mostly on the raised 'castles' fore and aft on the superstructure for its self-righting ability. *Eliza Fernley* lacked ballast, too

Sir Charles W Macara, Bart, in later life



"Sir Charles Wright Macara was the last great spokesman produced by the Lancashire cotton industry. No one was to enjoy such wide support after 1914 or again speak with such authority on the industry's problems.

He set out to create a stable and peaceful industrial environment of benefit to both employers and employees alike and believed that industrial progress could only emerge from social harmony between capital and labour.

Macara was buried in St Annes Parish Churchyard in 1929 close to the *Laura Janet* Memorial, for which he had organised the raising of funds." (*Historic England*)

looks well capable of discharging his duties, judging by the photographs. The bowman had to be physically strong and agile too, at one moment deploying heavy ground tackle or retrieving it, at another looking after the sail and its sheets. In these self-righting boats the masts were put up and taken down regularly while under way, so he would oversee that up for'ard What about the rest of this 'weak and sickly' crew? The first point to make is that the St Annes men did not belong to an isolated inward-looking community.

Twenty-two year-old crewman Nicholas Parkinson's father and brother at Lytham served on the

Charles Biggs and rescued the crew of the *Mexico*. There is no reason to suspect he was any weaker or less capable than his close kin. Five of the *Laura Janet's* crew lived in Lytham and had to race to the boathouse when they saw rockets fired from the Ribble lighthouse, or heard a signal (except for Nicholas, who was lodging in St. Annes).

William Johnson, Cox, lived in Common Side, Lytham, as did three others in the crew. Johnson habitually drove a horse and trap at high speed to get to St Annes boathouse in time, as already mentioned. When they saw or heard the signal it was every man for himself.

The Cox could not move closer to St Annes, as he lived in Lytham with his widowed 80 year-old mother and was her sole means of support. His brother James, who was ten years older than him, also lived in Common Side, and was married with five children under the age of 11. James was with him in the boat on December 9th.

There had been two older brothers, but they had been drowned while fishing off Blackpool twenty years earlier.

The thought of that old lady subsequently hearing the Joint Enquiry's verdict on her youngest son's illness and unfitness to command the *Laura Janet* within a few days of his death – and his brother's – does not dispose me to feel kindly towards Sir Digby Murray, the Hon HW Chetwynd, RN, or for that matter, that Spartan product of the Victorian aristocracy and Navy: Lt-Commander HTC Gartside-Tipping, RN. I strongly suspect that he was an *éminence grise* behind this whole Enquiry.

When the charitable donations were used to set up a trust for relatives later (within ten days £20,000 had been subscribed), William Johnson's illegitimate son was awarded 5 shillings per week, but there is nothing in the books to suggest that his mother received anything. Let us hope that this was merely an error of recording.

When viewed as a complete unit *Laura Janet's* crew was young and fit, consisting completely of working fishermen with a thorough knowledge of the estuary. All except three were below 40; nine were 35 or younger; seven were 30 or younger; five were below 25; and one was below 20. As was usual in boats this size, the crew totalled 13. Only two had new or additional careers to that of fisherman: Thomas Parkinson (28) was listed as a fisherman and slater, and Reuben Tims had begun dealing with fish rather than catching them.

As an example of the eager spirit that imbued this crew, take John Wignall (22), who missed the *Yan Yean* rescue as his oar was taken by a volunteer when he did not leave his home in Clifton Street, Lytham, in time to join the boat as it was launched. When the signal came for the *Mexico* service, this impoverished young fisherman paid a hansom cab driver double fare to take him post-haste to the lifeboat, so exposing the lie that all of these men were so poor that earning the gold sovereign for being part of a lifeboat rescue was their paramount reason for joining a crew as a regular. Thomas Parkinson (28) and James Harrison (19) were the only two men who had been out merely on practices, but they were fishermen and you can take it as read that they were tough and familiar with boats, and as long as they could row in unison with the rest of the crew they would soon learn whatever else was needed. James Harrison's late brother, William Butler Harrison, had been the original Coxswain of the *Laura Janet*.

Thomas Bonney (35) was the man who embarked with only a bowl of gruel under his belt. Having more or less damned him as an indigent pauper, Sir Digby Murray had then to convey to the Enquiry the opinion of the Secretary of the St Annes Branch, which was that Bonney only stunted himself for the sake of his family, and that did not happen frequently:



Dr. George Pilkington was the humanitarian equivalent of Charles Macara on the other side of the estuary in Southport. Former MP for Southport, he was the Secretary of his local National Lifeboat Institution branch and took his position very seriously, often joining the lifeboat crew on service. He was well-liked and well-known to the fishermen and their families.

The local Southport Corporation was taken aback when he suggested after the tragedy that they should henceforth provide the horses for the lifeboat carriage free of charge, as their contribution to the noble cause.

He played a prominent part in retrieving the bodies of the drowned men from the sands, and was one of the crew of 16 which took the *Laura Janet* on her last trip across the estuary to Lytham on Sunday, December 12th, where they were met by the *Charles Biggs* crew. A heavy sea was still running and one man was knocked off his thwart by a wave *en route*. The boat, however, behaved superbly.

The rough weather prevented them from continuing by sea to St Annes, so the lifeboat carriage was sent for and her journey home was completed by road.

As soon as a new boat, the *Norah Royds*, arrived from the NLI, the *Laura Janet* was returned to London and broken up. As was the *Eliza Fernley*, when she was replaced within a few days by the *Mary Anna*, a boat similar in design to Lytham's *Charles Biggs*.

'I do not think his privations lasted for more than a week or two – he showed no sign of it. We are privately informed* that this man's children always appeared to be well-clothed and fed, and that he only stinted himself for their sakes.'

If enquiries had been made of Thomas Bonney's neighbours and friends in St Annes, it is possible that a different picture of a tough, self-reliant individual may have emerged; someone who did not accept charity without demur.

In a symbolic development worthy of a novel by Herman Melville or Joseph Conrad, the sea did not give up its last *Mexico* victim until March 4th, 1887, despite all the other dead having been found by the time of the second part of the Coroner's Inquest on 18th December, 1886.

His body was by then so badly decomposed that no-one was able to identify him, until a local cobbler recognised the repairs he had once carried out on Thomas Bonney's boots.

Thus was the allegedly half-starved, physically ruined father of five the last one to return from 'The Bosom of Abraham', and his sudden late appearance ought perhaps to have been taken as a sign of shame for those who had defamed him and his band of brothers three months earlier.

He was buried near the porch of St Annes Parish Church four days later, alongside four of his shipmates: Charles Tims (Mate), Reuben Tims, James Dobson and Thomas Parkinson.

Their memorial is inscribed with words from the gospel of St John: 'Greater love hath no man than this. That a man lay down his life for his friends.'

Cox William Johnson lies in the churchyard of St Cuthbert's, in Lytham.

Six days after Thomas Bonney was found, the *Mexico* was refloated and towed into deep water.

On the night of December 9th, the call to action came in the form of rockets fired by the Ribble Lighthouse, which had a commanding view of the estuary even on nights like this, and was a fairly close neighbour of St Annes Boathouse. On that north shore the keepers saw the *Mexico's* flares first and were quick off the mark.

The *Laura Janet* was launched at 10:25pm, just 20 minutes after the *Charles Biggs*. This was smart work, too, as her crew was spread over a wide area owing to the nature of the small town. Eight out of the thirteen arrived in good time, in response to the rockets. The remaining five were scattered along 12 miles of coast, but well-ried and experienced substitutes for them were available if any didn't make it in time, and finally ten of the thirteen that had attended the *Yan Yean* were there, so the enthusiastic offer of the Scottish captain of that late coastal steamer was declined politely when they had their complement of 12 seated, and soon the Cox, William Johnson, arrived 'behind a smoking horse', having driven his trap at a gallop from Lytham.

The impecunious Thomas Bonney may have been given a place in the boat to ensure that they had a good excuse to decline the Scottish captain's offer – for his own safety – or to enable Bonney to earn a sovereign to ease his dire financial straits, or a little of both – who knows.

They were all in good spirits

* This could well have been Charles Macara. He was the Chairman of the St Annes Branch of the NLI, not the Secretary, however (and remained in post all his life).

If it was the Secretary, not the Chairman that gave Murray his opinions, he might have been offering advice to the Enquiry at Macara's request anyway. It would have been typical of Macara to jump to the defence of an underdog like this.

Survivor Henry Robinson later included these words in his testimony:

'Before the sea came, the Coxswain turned the boat broadside, but the crew wanted to row a little further up the channel and let her drop to leeward. When we got nearly alongside the ship, the boat capsized.

Before we capsized, we saw lights from a boat we thought was a lifeboat. John Jackson reported that it was the St Annes lifeboat. It seemed to be near the Hungry Brow (or *Angry Brow*). It was coming towards us very fast. The lights of the Lytham lifeboat were seen in the direction of the Pier.'

Survivor John Jackson was sure that the *Eliza Fernley* went over just before 12:40pm, as 'Harry Hodge's watch stopped at that time and I don't think it would go above a minute or two after we were thrown in the water.'

We can be reasonably sure of this time because it fits in with other evidence, such as the more reliable time checked by Captain Burmester on the Mexico's 'watch'.

To reach the position in which she was last seen, the *Laura Janet* would have averaged about 3.5 knots for the leg from St Annes.

For the rest of his life Henry Robinson held it as an article of faith, against all the evidence, that the *Eliza Fernley* had reached the *Mexico* first, and had that massive green sea not turned her over, would have left triumphantly with the rescued crew on board. He must have told himself that the *Charles Biggs* was still on its way out to the barque when they saw her lights, not heading for the Pier, Bog Hole – and Lytham.

The last evidence to consider while we are still out at sea are the red lights that were seen bearing W by N two miles out from Southport, in the area the *Laura Janet* would have reached at that time, and the sound of shouting that came downwind to the observers.

But in the words of the Enquiry:

'There is evidence of some shouting having been heard in the direction in which these two lights were seen, which renders it possible the boat may have been disabled in that position, but we doubt that it would be possible for shouting to be heard on such a night, a distance of two miles, although the listeners were to leeward.'

It is unfeasible that any vessel other than the *Laura Janet* would have been out there at that time showing lights – if that were so, this other vessel would have been on the shore in the morning with the wrecks of the *Laura Janet* and the *Eliza Fernley*, so Sir Digby Murray was being needlessly dismissive – and they did hear shouting or it wouldn't have been mentioned – but after the event there was nothing that could be ascertained about the lights, or proved one way or the other, and by the next morning there was much harder evidence to be found on the sands.



The lifeboatman who stands on top of the striking St Annes Lifeboat Memorial on South Promenade, close to the Pier, which is by far the most impressive of several memorials to the tragedy

The sculptor was asked to base the figure on a painting of Thomas Harrison, one of the new St Annes crew of the *Nora Royds*, the boat that replaced the *Laura Janet*, but he chose instead to depict the late Coxswain William Johnson, which perhaps ought to tell us something

He looks out forever over the heads of the crowds of St Annes to a spot eight miles off, where once an iron barque lay

The next tide began to flood around 04:30 to 05:00 on Friday December 10th. The wind still blew unabated directly towards Southport. As the *Eliza Fernley* had been the closest to shore when she went over, the bodies of her crew started to appear on the strand from early in the morning, some well before daylight. From about 11:00am the St Anne's crew came in on the tide.

The upturned *Laura Janet* was found at 11:15 by a Mr Marsden and Mr Edward Bland, and she was also seen by Police Sergeant Thompson, who was retrieving bodies close by, but was separated from the boat by a 50 yards wide channel, 3 feet deep. He borrowed a cart and located one body in the channel, then reached the boat and found three inside her, hanging upside down from the thwarts in a tangled web of cordage: Oliver Hodson, Richard Fisher – and Cox William Johnson.

As we saw in the last issue, the sheer amount of rope coiled neatly around the cockpit of a sail and oar lifeboat, secured with thin yarn that was easily broken to make it instantly available, meant that in a full inversion it was likely to come free and cascade around the crew, tangling any personal tethers they may have secured, too. That the Cox was hanging from a thwart might not mean much, except that he may have felt the need to tie on after a crisis threatened, or perhaps he was not tied on, and became caught by the web of lines only when she went over.

The other explanation is that the *Laura Janet* was overturned more than once and lost a number of her crew over the side in the first capsize before she righted. Thereafter, every survivor needed to take hold of an oar.

But why should that be, if they were racing along under sail? She certainly wasn't under oars when the *Eliza Fernley's* crew saw her '... coming towards us very fast', just seconds before they capsized themselves around 12:40pm. On one of the three bodies in the St Annes boat a watch was found that had stopped at 2:23am. It is reasonable to assume that the *Laura Janet's* final ordeal occurred at some time, or at some separate times, within that approximate 2-hour period. I cannot find any reference to the actual time that shouting was heard and those red lights were seen two miles out from Southport (but only just over a mile from the *Mexico*).

It's time to examine the boat as she lay on the strand, and later when she was righted and hauled out, to be visited by the large crowds that gathered during the day. One observer reported that:

'The rudder was unshipped and tangled with the throwing grapple – the grapple was about 30 yards from the boat. There was neither anchor nor cable. One mast had been set and was fast by the halliards. The step (*mainmast step or socket*) of the boat was broken, and the forward air box was full of water and had one plug out of it. In consequence of

the boat getting full of water, the bow would have been down. The clasp of the centre hatch was off.'

The reference to a mast being 'fast by the halliards' is confusing, as it suggests that a mast was with the boat, something that wasn't referred to later. Perhaps the observer is wrong in saying that only one mast had been set, as the mainmast was later found driven like a javelin into Horse Bank near Spencers Brow, 'embedded', to quote the record, not that far from the *Mexico*.

When she was examined onshore, there were few traces of damage to her superbly built hull except for the mast step, which had been destroyed by the mast being wrenched from it. Perhaps it had been finally held in place just by the halliards, which had quickly snapped, and our observer had seen the frayed ends. But the smaller mizzenmast may have been stepped also and just fell out of its socket to be held horizontally afterwards by its halliards. The photographs of the *Laura Janet* don't show masts, though the poles holding the bunting in the shot of her being launched are exactly in the positions that two mast steps would occupy. If the observer had used a different form of the verb, 'One mast had been set and **had been held** fast by the halliards ...', rather than **was** – everything would be easier!

You now have all the scant evidence to make up your own minds about what happened to the St Annes boat, but for what it's worth, here's what I think.

One of the most amazing aspects of the rescue is that three lifeboats set out at roughly the same time, but from different points on the shores of the estuary, taking vastly different routes to their objective – but they all came within striking distance of her in almost the same hour, and in that hour the seas became monumental.

The green sea that capsized the *Eliza Fernley* haunted her two survivors for the rest of their lives. In 1936, the 50th anniversary, the *Southport Visiter* (*sic*) interviewed

Henry Robinson, the last one:

'I saw it coming. A great green-back struck the *Eliza Fernley* at the quarter, with the force of a rock. You'd a thought a mountain had thrown itself at you. The boat capsized like a cork. It was filled with water and the men were pinned underneath ...'

That wave was part of a line that had passed under the *Laura Janet* a minute or so earlier. She had been lucky, and perhaps more skilfully managed, in not being caught dead in the water, but I don't believe she stayed on her feet much longer than the Southport boat as she was in a more vulnerable position out there. Soon after, she was caught by another great roller that took her up like a surfer being wiped out, inverted her, and brought her down with great force on the sands, which at that point of the ebb were only about eighteen feet below the surface. Her mast was driven into the seabed, and for a fraction of a second she was held there, the crew choking on seawater, before mast step and halliards gave way. A second wave may have caught her broadside on and rolled her upright, or perhaps her self-righting hull worked better than the *Eliza Fernley's* (she wouldn't have had oars out on both sides to hold her there, either).

She would need to be upright for them to find their store of lights and deploy two red ones, held by separate crew who were able to stand upright inside. Anyone clinging to the outside of the boat would have been washed away by now if they hadn't been grabbed immediately. Against a loud noise the human voice can carry a great distance – as when conversations are heard clearly on boats using outboard motors – and we know from John Jackson's evidence that they would have had to bawl at each other to be heard.

If this first trauma had destroyed the integrity of the bow tank and she went down by the head, swamped, then it would have been over in seconds, but I

think that damage occurred when she was finally rolled ashore, her crew all dead by then, when she also unshipped her rudder, as that would not have remained tied to her like a drogue by the grapnel line while out at sea. With the mainmast gone, and some of the crew with it, they had to take to the oars to keep her stern-on to the wave train, with at least two men on the tiller tackles.

The mast step was damaged beyond being capable of holding the mizzenmast, even if it had stayed on board, but they may have tried anyway, securing it upright with the halliards, while the futile attempt to keep her heading straight was made by a reduced rowing crew that now included a man who had been given only three months to live.

As the last hour ticked away with their dwindling strength it would have been impossible to hold her correctly, and some time after 2am she went over again and stayed there long enough to drown them all. The crewman's watch, that had been carefully tucked away beneath his oilskins and a couple of other layers so that it had resisted the first short

but violent immersion, finally succumbed at 2:23am. (Their watches would have been pocket watches, not wrist watches.)

Or it could all have happened quite differently, of course ...

Following their return to Lytham, the crew of the *Charles Biggs* discovered to their horror that the *Laura Janet* was overdue, and immediately relaunched. They were joined in the morning by the Blackpool boat the *Samuel Fletcher*, which returned home after the Cox was washed overboard when the boat was blown flat, and rescued only with difficulty – such was the continuing seastate. By 11:00am the indefatigable *Charles Biggs* appeared at Southport, which encouraged more of the locals to get out and search the shores for casualties. When they heard that dead St Annes crewmen were beginning to appear they turned around and sailed straight for the town. In a scene worthy of a pre-Raphaelite painting, she arrived off the beach and a horseman forced his mount through the roiling surf to the boat to hear their news more distinctly.

As the owner of 'the telephone' in St Annes, Sir Charles Macara had had a stream of visitors all morning, asking him for news, in a dreadfully ironic reversal of what had happened five days before, when their Cox and his mate had spoken over it to the papers after their first adventure in this storm, that had been blowing at a mere Force 9 at the time, when the *Yan Yean* yielded to it.

Sir Charles was tall and 'built to Herculean proportions', so his immediate physical presence must have been as comforting as his benevolent and kindly figure had been when seen around the town over the past two years. Nevertheless, it would have been to no avail when he convened a gathering of them all after 1:00pm at his house to tell the inconsolable group of family and friends that it was now confirmed: the disaster had been total. Similar violent public grief had seized Southport much earlier in the day. All but two of the St Annes dead washed up on that day; they were returned home on Monday, December 13th.

Keith Muscott

The St Annes crew of *Laura Janet*'s successor, the *Nora Royds*, posing a little reluctantly for a publicity shot to advertise the first 'Lifeboat Saturday'. The NLI suggested that the new boat be manned by Lytham volunteers until St Annes could find a crew, but: "Notwithstanding this tragic disaster, a new crew at once volunteered to take the places of their comrades. One cannot but marvel at the heroic courage of these brave men, never hesitating calmly to face the dangers of an angry sea, dangers which they fully realise, knowing they may never return" (Charles Macara).

Their personalities are undiminished by the clumsy use of the photographer's pen on the print, literally 'dotting their eyes'. The *Nora Royds* was donated by Sir Clement Royds of Rochdale. It was a popular design, with 25 similar boats in service along the coast. Not quite as big as the *Laura Janet*, but she could be heavily ballasted and was well able to right herself



and keen to go, but it was noted that the experienced and capable Sub-Coxswain, Charles Tims,

'... a brave man and a notable fisherman with great knowledge of that coast, gave signs of recognising that the task before them that night was one of far more than ordinary peril, and in some way more hazardous than any they had faced before.'

(Major AJ Dawson)

'He seemed to hear in that gale a voice he had not heard before'

(W Haslam Mills).

Charles Macara said later that it was the same storm that had started to build at the time of the *Yan Yean* rescue. It had backed a couple of points over the days since and had become on this night 'a storm of exceptional fury'. His house on the northern shore of the estuary was well-placed for him to see how the weather pattern unfolded in that week.

The men were still inspired by their rescue of the *Yan Yean's* crew a few days before, which had required them to row into the teeth of wind and tide and brave the exposed bank, a lee shore, close to the open sea. Perhaps they noticed that the *Charles Biggs* had chosen an inshore route and so they decided they would do otherwise.

However it was, they launched, and flung themselves out over Salthouse Bank in their youthful pride, raising sail after they had rowed for about 500 yards, their leaving viewed by anxious family and friends.

The watchers on the shore followed their light as it jumped around violently in the spray and spindrift for a while, before disappearing completely from view. At half-past eleven lights were seen out at sea, which they thought might belong to some other ship in distress, but would have been from their lifeboat.

The Cox had decided on the bold plan of taking her out to sea far enough to get behind the line of breaking waves, sailing first with the gale on her starboard bow, which would require seamanship of a high order, then, as she gained sea-room, swinging

her on to a roughly southeasterly course to line up on the position of the stranded *Mexico*, and so bring the wind right behind the boat.

This manoeuvre took everything to a much more serious level. They were now fully committed, with no chance of turning back against the wind, and with no tolerance for mistakes. As they squared up to the banks off Southport the accelerating wind now had a 150-mile fetch behind it.

They'd have had more than one man on the helm, with the best of the others detailed to tend the sail or sails. The possibility of broaching or being pooped by a huge sea would have been ever-present, so one man with steady nerves would have been detailed to watch their wake and maintain a flowing commentary. Each man would have been responsible for tethering himself inside the cockpit the best he could. Ironically, it is quite likely that they did not need a full complement of fit men as their approach was wind-driven after the first 500 yards, unlike the tactics the *Charles Biggs* and *Eliza Fernley* had to adopt, relying on oars for lengthy periods in terrible rowing conditions.

St Annes to Southport is eight land miles as the crow flies, but their sweeping parabolic course would have taken ten, probably more. As they approached Horse Bank, and so Spencer's Brow at its southern end, which led to the *Mexico*, they would begin to see why they were heading inevitably for total disaster.

First, this malevolent storm came to a crescendo as the three lifeboats were either approaching, or in the case of the *Charles Biggs*, leaving, the vicinity of the *Mexico*. The Lytham boat had been blown flat when it was within a quarter of a mile of its objective. It caught the first blows of the storm's climactic violence but managed to struggle on and then, with good luck, escaped being disabled during the heaving chaos of the rescue at the *Mexico*.

The storm aimed a last blow at her as they were leaving, the boat pounding the bottom once

or twice – which brings me to the second element in the developing tragedy.

The St Annes crew would have found the offshore sea-state bad enough in that margin between the estuary and the Irish Sea, but the water was falling rapidly now at this stage of the ebb, wind over tide and shoaling, so as they approached, Horse Bank must have presented them with a scene of utter turmoil, seen indistinctly in the black night, with great waves being created then instantly collapsing in all directions. It was a lee shore and there was no way of escaping it.

The single possibility might have been to veer due south and out-flank the approaching shoals by finding the gap that led into the south channel, then gybing to port and sailing up it towards Southport with the wind forward of the beam, if that were possible, and attempt to follow *Eliza Fernley's* course to the barque.

But that was a closed door now, for the shoals of the South Bar guarded the gap and at this moment they were creating a special Hell all of their own.

And so the *Laura Janet* would accept the inevitable, and after picking her way past the tumult off Angry Brow she carried on regardless over the last mile or so, still aiming to cross Horse Bank and reach the *Mexico*, whose mizzen-top light and last dying flare could be seen as she maintained her sweeping course towards her, like a little avenging angel riding the storm.

About 30 minutes after the *Charles Biggs* left with the survivors, the *Eliza Fernley* from Southport closed with the *Mexico*. The increasing gale had slowed them down almost to a halt so they had to look for a minor channel they knew on the bank to enable them to approach obliquely.

John Jackson noted at this point that the crew had to shout at full volume at each other but still could not be heard clearly, which is a reasonable indication that it had started to blow at Beaufort Force 10.

You're Not Any Good Anymore

In so many words this was said to me a while back by a younger who got better. That's fine. I told this to a coffee mate who had a good laugh about it. Later that day found me over to a fellow's place who had gotten burned by a building contractor promising promises that he could do the work Harvey left in his wake.

I could tell something was amiss. I wanted to help but, knowing I couldn't, I didn't offer. What I did notice were the questions being formed within my mind. Questioning the process of just what was wrong and what was the proper fix. Fog, it seemed, had replaced the knowledge I once had.

I've been noticing the slowdown. I'd like to say it doesn't bother me one bit but I'd be lying. I can also say honestly, good riddance. The good riddance has slowly been winning out over the regrets. You're not any good any more doesn't mean it's over. Perhaps the multitasking days are past, good riddance.

This leaves more time for small boat sailing and its accompanying chores needing attention. The wife has been telling me, "go sailing." I think she's right once again. A while back she told me to quit the best job I ever had, best paying anyway. I listened then and I think I'll be paying extra close attention now.

We've got a new project going that will demand some time but, in the midst of self imposed deadlines, she says "go sailing." I'd ignore her at my peril, so I won't. If it's to be sailing, sailing it is. I'm still inspired reading of the 70 somethings going off crossing oceans. I find I still have that itch and I think it's scratchable as well. To what degree time will tell. The important item being it's still there, the inspiration, the desire to go, to see the sea and experience it in all its moods.

Meanderings Along the Coast of Texas

By Michael Beebe

I've never been a runner, hiker or backpacker, although the hiking and backpacking appeals, the knees won't let me go there, they do let me skirt many a shore. Lately the early mornings when leaving the office, which sits right on the edge of Little Bay, gives plenty of inspiration to those wanting some. The quietness, the still waters of the bay, shrouded as they are in fog lately, give a beck and call to all who'll listen. Waiting, the water, waiting to share itself with all who desire to know her and her host of life, within, upon, and near.

This Week...

This week was full, thanks to the recent passing of H. Harvey. People are still bobbing up and down in his wake. But things are improving. Earlier in the week plumber Cris had his small Welsford designed dinghy out for a late afternoon sail. The tanbark sails did look nice, I think he has oars on that little thing, as the light wind seemed to be getting lighter.

Another friend from IOTB, I think that's how it's shortened (Ingleside on the Bay), is busy swapping and trading dinghies of sorts. He came by here for a rudder and tiller and a cut down wind surfer mast. This mishmash is gotten for free and trading up for a classic Dyer Dink. Years back I asked if he'd take me on as an apprentice, turned me down flat, said I got too emotionally involved.

Another day during this past week found me driving back to the house via Water Street. There, next to the upside down Wharram Tiki, sets a 42' Wharram on its trailer. It sat on the same trailer down at Cove Harbour for well on six weeks. The owner had other priorities but now she's safe and sound. Driving by again this evening shows he's in the process of getting the Tiki right side up. Harvey again.

I ran into Cris down at Cove Harbour north, not the plumber. This Cris flies a Scott, Flying Scott called proper. He's sailed many circles around me and then some. Heck of a nice guy. Said he's thinking of downsizing to a Mayfly 14. I mentioned for him to look up Chuck over in Beaumont. He's been sailing a Mayfly for five years or better. Does a good job of it, too.

Cris then told me he's had his sweetheart for 25 years. I said you better not sell her then, you're liable to regret it. Told him of Tom over in Portland who had a stretched Pelican built over 50 years ago, sailed it all over the Texas coast. Tom has many an interesting yarn to spin. I like listening to Tom. His aches and pains are catching up to him though, he let his girl go a bit over a year ago. He misses the gal, I know he does, how could he not, he told me so as well.

I might get out tomorrow, or maybe Saturday, Sunday? I'm smack dab in the middle of repairing a Harvey house for the Mrs and I. I'm thinking maybe four or six weeks until we move in, then, then it'll be sailing time again.

Hammer 'n Nail


Joshua Colvin's "Op Ed" in the April issue of *Small Craft Advisor* tells it like it is about the dreams of both youth and the elders mixing it up, he did a fine job about the boys in us, that is for sure. Where I meet with the fellows for morning coffee I'm the second youngest at 70. What I listen to comes from a bunch of high schoolers, myself as well, in old men's bodies. But the dreams live on, perhaps not as strong as once was but still they live. I say the youth and the age mixing it up come from knowing just how it is. The youth don't have the experience of old age, but the older crowd certainly do.

Last Sunday I went out for a six hour spell on the local waters. Anchored a bit off a bird refuge island, made up some Lipton soup on the new stove, finding just how much fuel it uses for how many boils. So far three boils, one filling. It's a Trangia alcohol stove, a nice little setup. Forego two magazines subs and a few soda pop bottles and I'm now in business once again. The swing stoves are nice as they are, but a bit large on my small rides.

While I was out at anchor the wind kicked up a bit, enough to consider a reef, so a reef it was. After tying one in and sailing off looking up at my nice job, a question comes of myself, why didn't I just roll the boom a few spins? I'd installed boom furling sometime back. Well, I guess that comes with the older mentality and the boy within still. Josh will get there himself.

The title of Joshua Colvin's article is "The Child Inside," I think he hit the nail on the head.


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Shipyard Manager Michael Gorman reports much work has been done over the winter on the log hull restoration of *Edna E. Lockwood*. The 1889 log bottom bugeye is the last of her kind and is set for relaunch at CBMM's OysterFest in St Michaels, Maryland, on October 27.

Edna's new log bottom has been permanently fastened to the original topsides with bronze bolts, each made from scratch out of 1/2" bronze rod with soldered nuts and washers forming the heads. CBMM shipwrights and apprentices will have fabricated more than 300 bolts when the restoration is complete later this year.

Shipwright James DelAguila led new shipwright apprentice Zach Haroth in fabricating *Edna's* new centerboard case. The case's 4" thick sides were pinned every 18" with bronze in the same manner that *Edna's* logs are held together. The inside of the centerboard case was also lined with more than 200' of #16 gauge copper for antifouling and preservation purposes.

Seip Family Foundation second year apprentices Michael Allen and Spencer Sherwood have teamed up to install *Edna's* new double sawn frames and mast steps. Made of white oak and bolted with custom bronze bolts, the frames and steps keep the masts in place and handle tremendous loads when the bugeye is underway.

Planking *Edna* has begun in earnest, all rotten hood ends have been staggered back and the inner stem and sternpost replaced, thus the gap between old and new will be closed. Shipwright Joe Connor will be handling the stern while Gorman will plank the bow, with the work of the two meeting in the middle. All new planking will be sawn out of the leftover *Edna* logs.

With the end in sight, *Edna's* new sails have been ordered with an estimated arrival



Edna Lockwood Restoration Progress



Centerboard.

Clamp.

Inside.



date of August 1. Traditional Rigging Co of Appleton, Maine, has been selected for their specialty in period sailmaking and handwork. Traditional Rigging Co has also agreed to document the sailmaking process with photos and progress reports posted on ednalockwood.org.

Next up for the team is constructing new cabin houses and hold hatches, with all work being done in full public view now through October. A new deck beam will need to be made and king plank reinstalled now that the centerboard case is completed. Once the planking and final fairing is completed, sanding and painting will finish off the project.

Built in 1889 by John B. Harrison on Tilghman Island for Daniel W. Haddaway, *Edna E. Lockwood* dredged for oysters through winter and carried freight, such as lumber, grain and produce, after the dredging season ended. She worked faithfully for many owners, mainly out of Cambridge, Maryland, until she stopped "drudging" in 1967. In 1973 *Edna* was donated to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum by John R. Kimberly. Recognized as the last working oyster boat of her kind, *Edna E. Lockwood* was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1994.

"This type of boat building is specific to the Chesapeake Bay," said CBMM Chief Curator Pete Leshner. "Just as Native American dugout canoes were formed by carving out one log, a bugeye's hull is unique in that it is constructed by hewing a set of logs to shape and pinning them together as a unit. Through October, museum guests will have incredible opportunities to watch the restoration progress and to see a boat built in a way you can find nowhere else, and in full public view."

To learn more, visit the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum on the Miles River in historic St Michaels, Maryland, or at cbmm.org.

White Fleet

A couple of tourists on a holiday cruise aboard the *Carnival Triumph* discovered that black raw sewage was coming up in their cabin's shower. Ship crew maintained it was nothing and they suggested they use the shower in the recreation area for the five days of the trip. Nothing was suggested about the odor that emanated from the bathroom, however, the couple was given \$300 in credit for inconvenience. Quite obviously, they filed a formal complaint and lawsuit.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) assessed the ship and sister Carnival ships *Breeze* and *Vista*, all of which failed inspection. CDC found filthy silverware and dishes, overflowing garbage near food preparation counters and "very serious" lack of sanitation throughout the ships. Inspectors claim that only one or two ships fail their inspections annually. Simultaneously three vessels from the same company have sanitation problems? And they wonder why so many people get sick on cruises.

A Christmas present turned to tragedy when the recipient fell overboard and was lost at sea. The incident happened on the *Carnival Triumph*, which was moving from New Orleans to Mexico. Meanwhile, *Carnival Elation* discovered that a woman fell from her balcony and was never found. This was a Bahamian trip. Statistically someone goes overboard about every ten to twelve days. January was not a good month for Carnival ships.

Gray Fleet

The US Navy has never, ever charged an officer for negligent homicide, in no small part because the military is ruled by the Uniform Code of Military Justice and not by the laws of civilian jurisprudence. Captain Kevin S. Eyer (USN Ret) stated that the concept is "complex, esoteric, arcane and difficult to prove."

The last naval officer to be tried, found guilty and shot for said negligence was Admiral John Byng of the Royal Fleet in 1857. Said conviction and penalty deeply wounded the British Navy's pride, was hotly debated and discussed and considered wrong by many officers. King George II ignored William Pitt's pleas for mercy.

Since then, negligent homicide by a military officer has been shunted to the back burners throughout western civilization (although Joseph Stalin slaughtered generals right and left for losing their battles against Finland in the winter war of 1939 and against Germany in WWII).

Now that 17 enlisted men have died aboard ships in collisions in 2017, the Navy has brought up the subject, very softly. Four collisions in one year with that number of fatalities created an environment of serious question about negligent homicide and its consequences. Over 200 years since the shooting of Byng, all military branches understand the ramifications. Hesitancy and fear prevails.

Nevertheless, the Commanding Officers and junior officers with one Chief of the *USS McCain* and the *USS Fitzgerald* have been charged with a variety of offenses including dereliction of duty, negligent homicide and hazarding a ship. From a purely legalistic perspective, the trials and judgments will be historic and precedent setting. Both prosecution and defense will have lengthy and definitive presentations. Those who remember the book and movie *The Cain Mutiny* will find parallel discourse.



Over the Horizon

By Stephen D.
(Doc) Regan

Vice Admiral Tom Rowden, head of the US Surface Forces (SURFOR) and US Surface Forces Pacific (SURFPAC), was quietly asked to step down early because of the four collisions. He did so just as quietly, read that "without ceremony" so that his successor could take command as soon as possible to proffer a neutral and fresh view of the issues at hand. Vice Admiral Joseph Aucoin, 7th Fleet, was earlier retired because of the collisions. The lack of training, insufficient experience and the Congressional Sequestration all played a part in these horrendous happenings. Lots of heads have, or will soon, roll and careers of good men will simply be flushed away even if they were thousands of miles away. Regardless of circumstance or feelings, this subject will be the primary discussion at a lot of officers' clubs and civilian bars.

The Navy's LCS ships have long been subject of this column and rarely has the news been good. The *USS Little Rock* (LCS-9) is no exception when it comes to making the Ring Knockers and Gold Braids look questionable. This time the ship did not smack anything, run aground or destroy its engines but it did manage to get iced in in Montreal and it cannot leave until spring.

The *Little Rock* was christened in Buffalo, New York, next to her predecessor, *USS Little Rock* (CG-4). Unfortunately an Arctic blast suddenly froze up the St Lawrence Seaway and stuck our favorite class of warship in Canada. Officers and crew always wanted a winter vacation in Canada, one assumes. On the positive side, Canada can rest assured that Montreal is defended from invasion by her neighboring cousins.

The People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) captured the *USS Pueblo* (AGER-2) 50 years ago, held the 82 crewmen for over a year and demanded a diplomatic apology from the US. The ship was in questionable waters, obviously was a spy ship and had little choice but to surrender. The Navy loudly condemned the capture and more loudly condemned the skipper, CMDR Lloyd (Pete) Bucher, for surrendering his ship, the first capitulation of a warship since the War of 1812.

The problems were numerous. The ship was a spy ship sailing very close to North Korea. The vessel carried the most sophisticated cryptological equipment known to the US. The crew was the most highly educated and skilled technological brains in the intelligence field. The Communications Technicians (now called Cryptology Technicians) were linguists, radio intelligence operators, Morse intercept operators, non Morse radio interceptors and maintenance personnel. Their capabilities are legendary.

The ship itself was virtually unarmed, carrying only two small machine guns since it sailed under the guise of an oceanic research vessel. None of the officers were crypto cleared and had virtually no knowledge of exactly what kind of equipment they were carrying or the level of sensitive material scat-

tered around the cabins. Worse, there were extremely limited means of destroying material and machines should a situation arise. Coupled with no real gunners mates, no air or surface cover and few flag officers who knew their mission, the *Pueblo* was defenseless.

Bucher sent a CriticCom, meaning he needed immediate armed support, but neither WestPac nor anyone else in the Pacific really understood what exactly a CriticCom was or how to react. The desk sailors simply dropped the ball from lack of training and understanding. Capt Bucher surrendered the ship after he was raked with machine gun fire simply because he had little with which to counter. Because he had little background in radio intelligence or cryptology he did not understand the incredible wealth of radio intelligence he was passing on to the North Koreans and, ultimately, Russia.

The crew was first treated kindly but as the Koreans had more and more difficulty understanding the cryptological equipment aboard, the men became increasingly tortured. The National Security Agency was outraged by the greatest intelligence loss in American history. The efforts of people's entire careers were sunk because the machines and files on the *Pueblo* were not. A decade after the incident, the mention of the *Pueblo* aroused significant anger in the halls of NSA.

As a former CT, I served with Commander Bucher in California although I never met him personally. I also served with several men who were on the *Pueblo* and some who served on the *USS Liberty* (an intelligence ship attacked by Israel). The Navy let our best and brightest hang out to dry. Personally, I have great sympathy for Pete Bucher and I am glad I never had to serve in a circumstance where a crew was so easily ignored. On the other hand, I also served with those brilliant people at the National Security Agency who watched a generation's worth of work slip quietly down the drain.

Small Boats

This month's *Duckworks* magazine features an interview with Finnish boat designer Perttu Korhonen who built a small micro-cruiser somewhat akin to the Puddle Duck. It is small but can sleep a couple of kids or an adult while sailing or rowing. He has also designed a canoe, kayak and a small boat with proa. Typical for a Finn, he wants simplicity with a dash of quirkiness.

WWW.Boatlinks.com is the source for all things small boat. One article that seems interesting is Bill Wallace's "Making the Tyvek Sail." A small boat at the Lake Pepin (Minnesota) Messabout showed off its unique design and made from scrap sail that was composed of a sheet of Tyvek. It was marvelous despite the builder's embarrassment that his sails didn't look as "cool" as the rest of the fleet's. We, contrarily, loved the concept. The whole idea of making sails from scraps is wonderful and Wallace's article gives all the directions needed.

Someone ignorantly said that cold is a state of mind. Someone else replied that mind numbing cold is the state of Minnesota. Be that as it may be, Iowa (almost Minnesota) is about as miserable as anywhere in the winter, however, *WoodenBoat* magazine sells a Putt Putt Steam Boat that is small enough for the bathtub, runs on vegetable oil and is inexpensive (a mere \$6.75). Frozen sailors everywhere could use this as their excuse for an

annual bath.

They also have a rubber band operated model tugboat called the Toad. This slightly more expensive (around \$35) is 8" and features a solid wood hull, copper rudder pins, brass portholes, an adjustable rudder and stainless steel prop shaft. It is rated as Skill Level 1 to build, that means I will need to enroll at the community college for classes to even understand the directions.

Inland Waterways

Winter's blast of ice and cold wreaked havoc in rivers from the Seine in France to our own Ohio River where 60 barges broke free due to flooding and ice forcing the Coast Guard to team with private business and the Army Corps of Engineers to rescue them. This all happened near Pittsburgh. Meanwhile, 34 other barges in West Virginia broke away and only 25 have been found.

The Coast Guard issued warnings to towboat owners and crews that they will increase their surveillance of drug usage to include semi synthetic opioids because of the increased usage and addiction to these usually prescribed drugs. In the past the Coast Guard has examined crew for marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, PCP and opiates. Now they will include the semi synthetic opioids, especially those known as OxyCotin, Percodan, Percocet, Vicodin, Lortab, Norco, Dilaudid and Exalgo. Any crewman who tests positive and has a valid prescription must be reported to the Coast Guard and kept from safety sensitive duties. Legal beagles claim that the regulations need to be changed from the word "opiates" to "opioids."

In the late 1940s Cargill searched for a viable "back haul" for their barges that hauled grain south from the Midwest. They decided that rock salt for highway use would fill the bill and by the middle 1950s the nation's winter roads were covered with salty sand. What started as a side business is now a major enterprise for Cargill and a myriad of other haulers. Cargill purchased several salt facilities especially in Louisiana. Morton Salt, usually known for table salt, is the second biggest mover of rock salt and owns many facilities throughout the world.

Now two groups have questioned the entire industry. The State of New York believes that rock salt can be obtained sig-

nificantly cheaper from North America rather than the Chilean salt shipped by Cargill and asked for an inquiry.

The other group questioning the salted roads are the environmentalists who claim that virtually all the salt spread on the roads ultimately ends up in rivers, contaminating the waterways. Some studies indicate a potential for damage. This topic is years away from action but it is worth of interest.

Merchant Fleet

Capital Ship Management Corp set up a joint venture with Liberty One, a German company, to create Capital Liberty Investment to explore growth opportunities in the container segment, Post Panamax vessels, tankers, bulkers and multi purpose ships. Capital Ship Management is a subsidiary of Capital Maritime Trading Corp that owns 74 merchant ships.

Navios Maritime has agreed to purchase two Panamax ships, each at 74,000dwt, for about \$22 million. The builders are unnamed but will deliver the ships in the first quarter of 2018. Navios is a Greek company that owns 38 ships currently.

Asia Energy Logistics, a Hong Kong firm, entered into an agreement with Danish Clipper Group to acquire a pair of Handy-size bulk carriers. The ships are *Clipper Selo*, owned by CFCL Handy Clip III, and *Clipper Panorama* owned by CFCL Handy Clip IV, both of which are subsidiaries of the Clipper Group but flagged in the Marshall Islands. Lotus Gold Shipping owns Asia Energy Logistics. The ships will be available for charter.

South Korea's Hyundai Merchant Marine purchased an ultra freezer ship that can carry cargo at -60°C, unlike most freezer type ships that operate at -35°C. This is especially interesting since only Maersk Line operates an ultra freezer. The unfortunate side is that the cost of shipping at those temperatures is eight times more expensive than regular freezers.

Russia shipped 3,000 metric tons of wheat to Turkey. Big deal. The grain came from Rostov-on-Don to Samsun, Turkey, invoiced by Prime Shipping Foundation that is a Gibraltar based entity owned by Quorum Capital Ltd. Whoopdy do! But this event is historical because instead of basing the cost using the US dollar, they used

cryptocurrency for the first time. The Prime token was the fiscal currency, a computer generated system from the Prime Crypto Bank. Down the road in the Ukraine, Varnar is negotiating with sundry countries to use Bitcoin instead of hard cash. Start collecting your quarters and dimes because your grandchildren will probably never use coinage in their adulthood. I am just getting this credit card stuff down.

A Trinidad and Tobago supply ship was aground off St Thomas in the US Virgin Islands. The Coast Guard ordered the crew to make fuel and ballast tank soundings to see if the hull had been breached. Evidently, the initial report merely indicated that the ship was simply on land instead of floating at sea. It happens.

Things That Piss Me Off

A) Three hundred caged birds were tossed overboard and drowned when authorities attempted to stop smugglers who were carrying the birds they had captured in South America.

B) The different attitude between people at a Messabout and people at the Yacht Club.

C) The Royal Navy is in the BVI assisting with supplies, cleanup and restoration. They are also providing for invalids and senior citizens from rest homes and care facilities. Meanwhile the US Navy is sailing through the Scarborough Shoals seeing if the Chinese will attack them.

D) Slaves forced into fishing in over fished areas off Asia.

E) That the Navy still is unable to answer the question if the several destroyers that collided with others were electronically "hacked."

F) That the War on Drugs continues to be a losing battle. The Coast Guard recently captured 21 tons of cocaine in San Diego. It was worth about \$750 million!!

G) That Iowa's winter has been depressingly sunny and warm while I rusticate at an expensive beachside apartment in Florida.

H) That my wife reads my article with severe criticisms and corrections AFTER I send in the manuscript to *MAIB*.

I) That Admiral John Byng's family's request for posthumous pardon was denied by the Ministry of Defense and the Queen in 2007.



My daughter, who is now in graduate school, has become enamored with sailboats of all kinds and had crewed on several tall ships over the last few years. She wants her own small sailboat, but given her current nomadic life style a regular sailboat just doesn't make sense. So it is with great interest that I found the plans for the Flapdoodle at Duckworks. A folding sailboat that can be cartopped seems to be exactly what she needs. I ordered the plans and jumped right in. The plans present two versions, Flapdoodle 2 and Flapdoodle 3. The major difference is that the former has the panels joined with fishing line and the latter uses stainless steel hinges. I opted to build version #3.

I thought this would be a simple project since it would be the smallest boat I have built over the last 40 years (One peapod, nine canoes, two sharpies and three St Pierre Dories). However, even with this experience I ran into problems. The plans require much interpretation and I would not recommend this project for the novice boat builder. Some information critical to the construction is lacking and, in my opinion, some is in the wrong order.

I believe the basic concept of a folding pram is great and unique but the plans need some more explanations and details. So I am recording my observations to help others who are intrigued by the concept of a folding sailboat. The Flapdoodle plans are downloaded from the web as a series of chapters that cover different parts (sub units) of the sailboat. I will discuss each chapter in the order suggested in the download and provide clarifications that I believe may help others.

Chapter 1: Getting Started

This is a good introduction and helps you get started:

Plywood: I found that 5mm underlayment works well. It is not the best looking plywood but I tested it and it is waterproof. I coated the major hull panels with pigmented epoxy so the appearance of the wood did not matter. The epoxy coating also increased the strength of the panels, especially their resistance to punctures.



Fabric: I ended up using pieces from an old vinyl bimini top I had. This fabric is quite strong but flexible and is easy to glue.

Chapter 2: Decisions

This is the list of decisions mentioned in the plans:

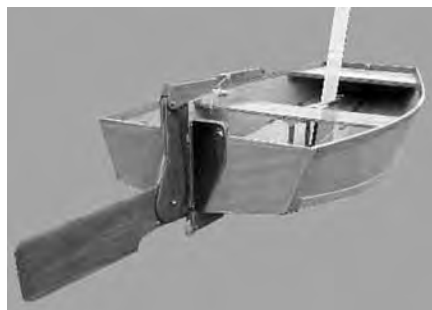
1. Daggerboard.
2. Daggerboard box (later you could use a leeboard).
3. Mast step (a step forward of the dagger box would be easy though).
4. Skag could be eliminated and the skag does not have to have a wheel.
5. Rudder assembly.

Decisions 1-5 all relate to making the flapdoodle a sailboat, so the first decision

Building the Flapdoodle

Part I - Not for the Beginner

By Tom Hruby



is whether to build a sailboat or not. If one goes with the sailboat, one will need all five of the items listed as subject to a decision. Furthermore, decisions 3 and 4 suggest there are some choices to be made regarding a mast step and skag. If one uses the sail plan provided (balanced lug) the mast step has to be forward of the daggerboard box. The center of effort of the sail would be behind the daggerboard if the mast step is attached to the central seat as indicated in Chapter 10 (Center Seat). Also, it would be very cumbersome to try to sail with the mast in the center of the boat, no place to sit without being either too far forward or aft.

If one opts for the sail, a skag is necessary to anchor the rudder plate. The skag cannot be eliminated. The plans do not make that clear.

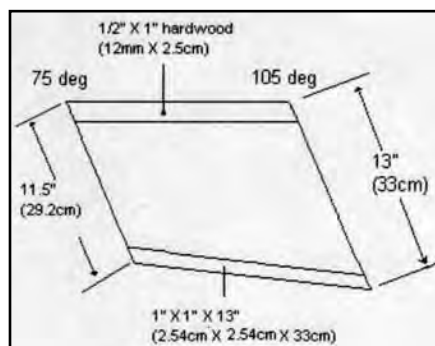
Chapter 3: Offsets (Cutting the Panels)

The description of how to mark the offsets and cut out the panels is good. I don't have any comments that might improve the process.

Chapter 4: Daggerboard and Daggerboard Box

The dimensions of the plywood needed to rough out the dagger box are not correct. The directions say to use a piece 14"x17" but then the drawing of the box shows that the base is only 13" and at angle (see below). If one built the box as proposed the box would be too big. Luckily, I started by first cutting out the sides using the angles and distances in the drawing and found the discrepancy before I glued everything together.

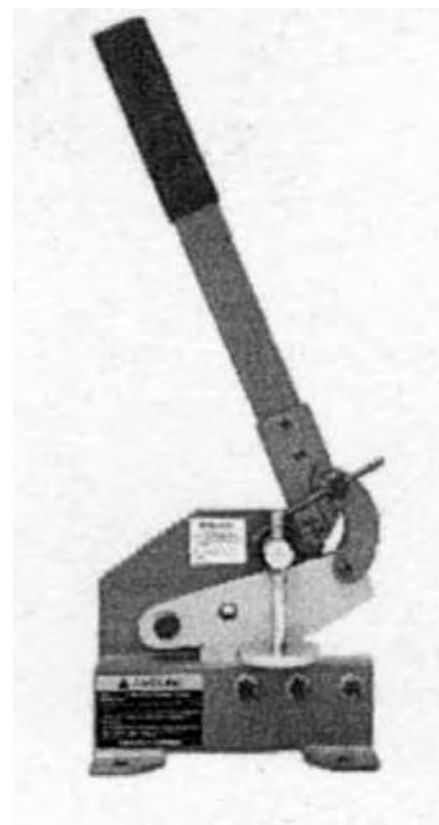
From the plans: Glue and clamp the two spacer strips on the "ugly side" of one of the 14"x17" (35.5cmx43.2cm) box blanks. Use heavy weights on a flat surface if needed, I used the dagger board as a flat surface below. But then it shows the following size for the box. This is the correct size based on the design for the daggerboard.



Chapter 5: Metal Hinges

Buying a 6' stainless piano hinge is a great idea and works well. I found mine on Amazon and did not have to go to an Ace Hardware store. However, I did not look forward to cutting the long hinge into 24 smaller ones. The metal cutting blade of a standard angle grinder has a relatively large curf and will create a burr that makes it difficult to pull the pin out. On the other hand cutting the hinges with a small rotary tool such as the Dremel takes forever.

Solution: I like to find excuses to buy new tools so I bought a set of 5" metal shears. I could not cut through the entire hinge so I pulled out the pin (6' of it) and cut each half of the hinge separately. This also let me cut the pins 1/8" shorter, as suggested in the plans, without having to shorten each pin separately. I used a regular nail cutter for that. Metal shears are available on Amazon.

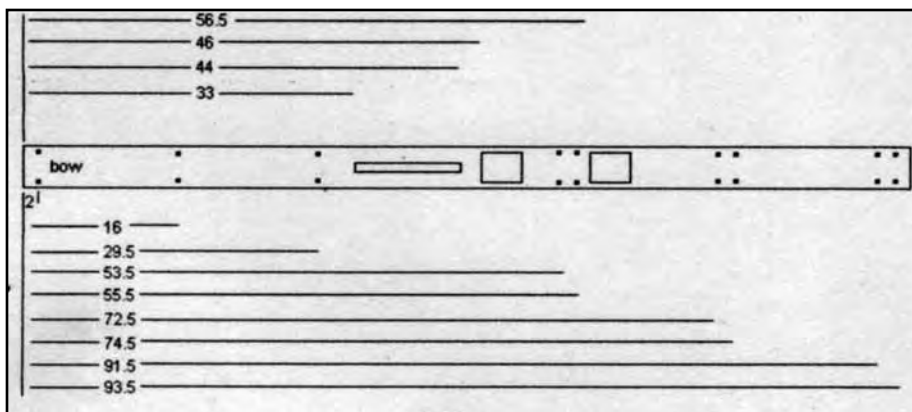


Chapter 6: Keel

In this chapter one builds the keel and everything that is attached to it (daggerboard box, steel hinges and the PVC hinges). Several issues cropped up as I was following the instructions.

1. It is critical that one uses the thinnest nuts possible when attaching the hinges. Also make sure that the bolts do not extend above the base of the hinge more than the height of the gap between the two pieces of the hinge when it is folded over. I used stainless steel 3/8"x#10 flathead machine screws. I found that I could not use lock washers under the nuts because the gap formed when the hinge is folded over was too small. I needed to use a threadlocker (the red type) to make sure the nuts did not come off during use.

2. After I had attached the bottom panels to the keel, I found that the gap between the two hinges on either side of the daggerboard box was too large. The distance between the hinges at the box was 24" as shown below.



From plans showing large gap in placement of hinges at the daggerboard slot.

When the sides were folded this gap created a very deformed bottom shape. Also, any pressure on the box pushed the keel down with enough force that the PVC cloth hinges were heavily strained. I had to add another hinge under the box and then shape the cork gasket to fit around the hinge.

3. The plans call for attaching the cloth PVC hinge with PVC glue to the keel and then sealing the supporting strips that lie on top with an acrylic caulk. My experience with these two products suggest that this is not the best option. Once PVC glue dries it becomes as hard as your standard PVC pipe and will crack if subject to continuous flexing. I used a more flexible glue (E6000 that comes in 10oz cartridges). It is more of a "rubber" based glue that has enough of the right solvents to slightly soften and attach to PVC.

I would also not recommend using a water based acrylic caulk. I have found that it may take six to eight months to cure when it is used between layers that are 2"-4" wide. The width of joint does not allow water to evaporate easily. Any contact with water will dissolve the caulk in the seam before it is fully cured. I would recommend using a solvent based caulk.

Another product I am trying for the first time is a silicone based adhesive sealant from GE (Iron Grip). My tests show that it has good adhesion to painted or epoxied plywood and it does not give off vapors (except for a slight smell of ammonia).

Chapter 7: Panel Hinges

This chapter describes the procedure for attaching the two bottom panels to the keel. Below is the diagram from the plans. How-

ever, I would not suggest using this diagram to locate the holes for the hinges in the bottom panels. When the panels are attached to the keel, the keel will bend along the curve of the bottom sheet. There is a $\frac{1}{4}$ " discrepancy in the position of the holes at the bow and stern if one locates the holes as shown because the distance along the edges of the panels are not the same as the distance along the edge of the keel. The distance along the curve is $96\frac{1}{2}$ " not the 96" along the keel. One needs to measure the distance along the curve of the panel when placing the holes so they line up with the holes in the keel.

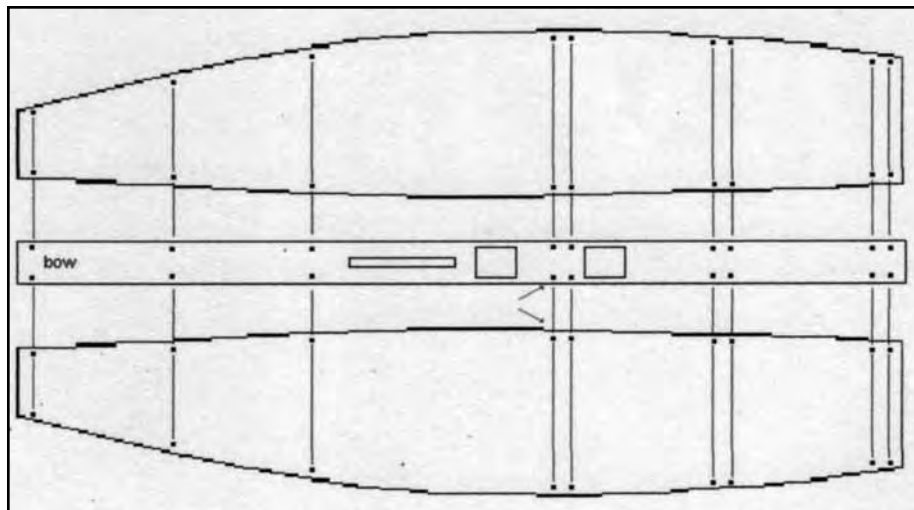
However, there is no need to adjust the holes between the bottom panels and the side panels. These curves are the same so there will be no offsets between the edges.

Chapter 8: Side Panels

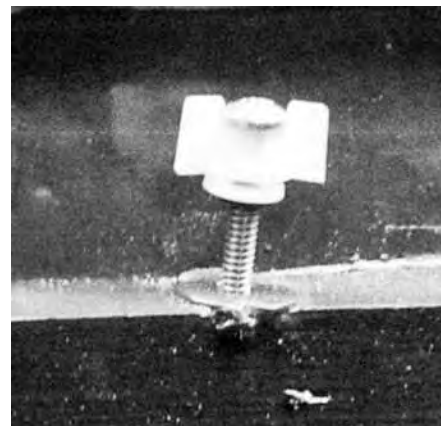
This chapter should be placed before those in Chapter 7. The first sentence even says to trim the sides before assembly.

Chapter 9: Brackets

The plans call for preparing a number of brackets to hold the seats and other pieces. However, I changed the design enough that I only needed one bracket/support plate for the center frame.



Rather than using notches in brackets to hold down the forward and rear seats I used thumbscrews and T-nuts. The T-nuts were glued into holes using E6000. I have some concerns that the seats might "pop out" if there is some flexing of windward side when sailing at a heel. Since I could not find stainless thumbscrews, I made my own using #10/24 machine screws and nylon wing nuts.

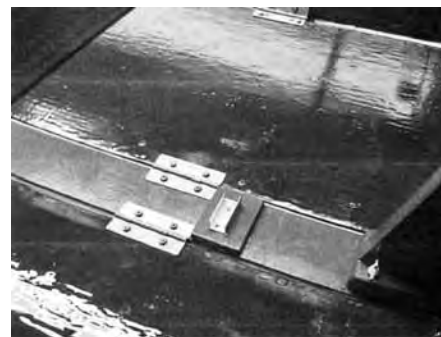


Chapter 10 Center Seat (Thwart)

I opted for a center frame to increase the space inside the hull. This option is presented in a separate chapter called "Center Frame." However, the chapter is a standalone, and not accessible from within the sequence of chapters. In other words, one cannot get to this section by hitting a link within the chapters or "next." I found it only by printing out everything in the index. As the designer states in the beginning, "Be sure to read everything before starting!"

For some reason, I can't seem to follow plans exactly. I always think I can come up with modifications that improve things, sometimes they work and sometimes they don't. So again, I did not follow the plans for the frame exactly. I had some leftover $\frac{3}{4}$ " aluminum channel from another project (a folding canoe using corrugated plastic) that I used for the sides. The channel was screwed into the 1"x3" board along the bottom. To increase the stability, I also added a small piece of the aluminum channel to the keel so there would be no chance for the frame to pivot. I found that the frame moved when I stepped inside. The floor panels had enough flex that the frame did not stay in place and bounced around.

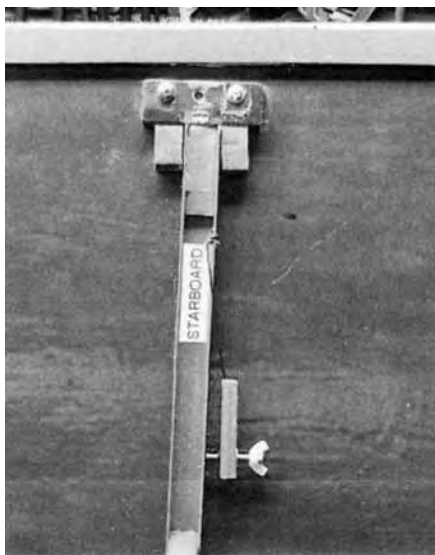
There is something else that shows up in these photos. To improve the looks and keep dirt out of the PVC hinge, I glued a 2" strip of polypropylene webbing along the gap. The first photo shows what it looked like before the webbing was added. The second shows the webbing in place. I believe this will also reduce the flexing in the areas between the hinges.





I noticed throughout the plans that there was little thought given to what might happen when the hull is severely flexed during sailing. The seats and frames are held in position with notches that are only 10mm deep. I used thumbscrews and wing nuts wherever I could to minimize movement of the removable parts. This included the front and rear seats and the sides of the center frame. The center frame is fitted into a notch with a thumbscrew plug that goes entirely through the hull. The T-nut is on the outside of the hull and the block of wood that holds the vertical position is attached with barrel bolts rather than just screws.

In all of my boat building I have yet to make the two sides mirror images of each other, and the Flapdoodle was no exception. The distance between the bottom panels and the top was off by $\frac{3}{32}$ " on the starboard side relative to the port side, so I had to label the frame to make it fit properly.

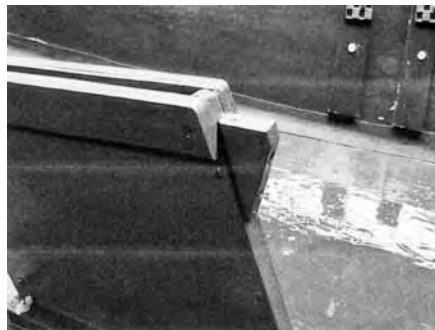


Chapter 11: Pedestal

The design of the pedestal incorporates a hole for the mast. As mentioned previously, this is not an option for the suggested sail plan. Anyone building the sailing version will probably want to redesign the pedestal.

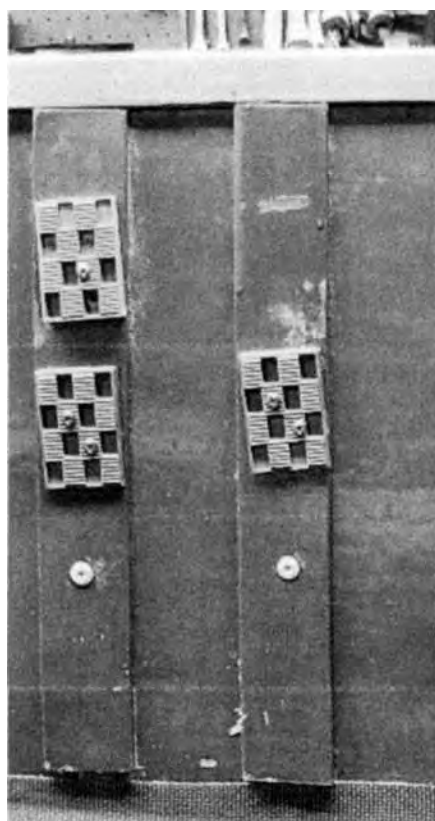
Boat builders opting for a center frame will also still need a thwart of some kind to keep the daggerboard box firmly in place.

THIS IS CRITICAL IN THE SAILING VERSION and not mentioned at all in the plans. Rather than a full seat, I opted for a narrow seat/wide thwart from a 1"x6" piece of pine. I notched the 1"x6" to fit over the box and provided a support for it so it would not slide down. A pin ($\frac{3}{16}$ " stainless cotter pin) going through the board into the support locks the seat in place. In this case I did not think it necessary to use thumbscrews because the main center frame is only a few inches away.



In the photo above you will also note that I have used a different method for supporting the thwart on the side panels. First I bolted and glued two vertical strips of 5mm plywood to the side using barrel bolts. These spanned the entire panel vertically rather than just being 4" wide brackets as suggested in the plans. My concern with using short brackets is that any weight on the seat might cause bulging of the sides. The 5mm plywood sides are quite flexible, even when coated with epoxy. A true $\frac{1}{4}$ " ply might be stiffer.

I like to re-use stuff I already have around in my workshop. Rather than cutting out new brackets to support the seat I used some flooring wedges that just happened to be the same color. The supports are angled to match the angle of the top of the daggerboard box.



Chapter 12: Gunwales/Rubrails

The 5mm underlayment I was using was not very stiff in long narrow pieces, so I used 1.25"x $\frac{1}{4}$ " lattice for both the gunwales and rubrails. These were first glued to the side panels using the flexible "Iron Grip" silicone glue from GE. Rather than screwing these together with wood screws, I again opted for #10/24 barrel bolts and blue threadlocker. This way the two sides are as one unit. The barrel bolts, however, do require $\frac{1}{4}$ " holes.

Chapter 13: Stern

Finally a set of directions that was straightforward and did not lead me to look for alternatives. The only difference was that I used hard maple rather than oak. I had some leftover bed slats from a bunk bed that were just begging to be used for something.

I would, however, like to suggest that anyone adding a skeg drill additional screw holes through the bottom reinforcing straps of the stern. This will simplify attaching the skeg described in Chapter 18. The plans for the skeg (Chapter 18) indicate that it should be attached by screwing it to the keel from the inside through the stern support. This is not possible if the stern support is already attached to the keel. The heads of all my four electric drills were too large to let me drill down straight. Of course, I had to discover this refinement too late. I ended having to use a flexible drill shaft and screw driver.



I used cork for the gasket between the daggerboard box and the keel as suggested in the plans. However, for the stern I used the GE silicone adhesive instead of the cork as suggested in the plans. I layered about $\frac{1}{8}$ " on the support, put the support on the keel and let it cure in the vertical position. It was then very easy to lay the boat on its side and permanently fix the support with screws from the bottom. It meant I did not have to ask my wife to hold everything in place while I drilled pilot holes from the bottom. I do most of my building between 6am and 9am and she is not a morning person!

Chapter 14: Transom

Building the transom was not complicated and proceeded as described in the plans. My one modification was to use $\frac{1}{2}$ " aluminum square channel for the "lock brackets." I glued and screwed two pieces to the transom with the open part facing inwards. The T-bracket on the stern slides between the two pieces and gets locked in place.

Chapter 15: Rear Seat

I used $\frac{1}{2}$ " plywood for the seat rather than gluing up two pieces of 5mm ply. This saved one step in the process. As mentioned

previously, I attached the seat the side brackets with thumbscrews. To provide additional stability I attached a horizontal piece of $\frac{1}{2}$ " aluminum channel to the transom so when the seat was slid over the T-bracket the back of the seat would go into the channel. (I have a lot of recycled aluminum square channel so I used it wherever I could.) The picture shows the aluminum channel used on the T-bracket and along the transom. I suspect, however, that the black and white photo will not make this very evident.

The pictures also show the hitch pins I used at first to hold the seat in place, but these still did not provide enough stability so I replaced them with the thumbscrews. There was too much play between the seat and the side with the pins.



Chapter 16: Stem, Foredeck and Bowplate

In the sailing version the foredeck provides the major support for the mast and is the point at which most of the power of the sail is transmitted to the hull. The plans as drawn, however, do not include any locking mechanisms between the stem, foredeck and bowplate. They only include locking brackets for the foredeck that hold it to the sides.

I do not believe that this system will provide enough support for the mast and sail. I tested the design by attaching a closet pole to the foredeck and temporarily fixed it to the keel. I could easily bend the entire front end out of shape by pulling sideways on the pole. In order to strengthen the connections between these critical parts I added a locking mechanism between the stem and the bowplate like that found between the transom and the stern post. I also added a horizontal $\frac{1}{2}$ " aluminum channel on the bowplate into which the foredeck can be slid. Finally I again used thumbscrews to attach the foredeck to the supports along the sides. The thumbscrews keep the foredeck tight against the sides and in the square aluminum channel on the bowplate.

The picture below shows the additional maple board attached to the stem that is used to lock the bowplate. The board is that old slat from a bunkbed ($\frac{3}{8}$ " thick by 1.5" wide).



The plans for the stem leave a major step out of the process, curving the bottom of the stem to conform to the curve in the keel. The stem is 22" long and if it is not curved there is a $\frac{3}{8}$ " inch gap between the stem and keel in the middle. The plans describe a pro-

cess for curving the daggerbox (which is only 13" long) to conform to the keel, but not for the stem which is longer.

I transferred the curve onto a piece of cardboard and then shaped the stem to match. One does not need complicated tools to draw this curve. Tape a pencil to a scrap piece of 1"x2" or similar wood so the pencil extends about $\frac{1}{2}$ " beyond the end. Place a piece of cardboard that is at least 23" long vertically along the keel. With the hull in the open position, as in the picture above, draw the curve onto the cardboard using your homemade scribe. Cut the cardboard along the pencil line and use it as a template for the curve on the stem.

Chapter 17: Fabric Hinges

This is a repeat of what I wrote in Chapter 6: Keel. The issues I have described in putting together the keel apply to all the different places the PVC cloth needs to be attached. The plans call for attaching the cloth PVC hinge with PVC glue and then sealing the supporting strips that lie on top with an acrylic caulk and screws. My experience with these two products suggest that this is not the best option. Once PVC glue dries it becomes as hard as your standard PVC pipe and will crack if subject to continuous flexing.

I used a more flexible glue (E6000 that comes in 10oz cartridges). It is more of a "rubber" based glue that has enough of the right solvents to slightly soften and attach to PVC. I would also not recommend using a water based acrylic caulk. I have found that it may take six to eight months to cure when it is used between layers that are 2"-4" wide. The width of joint does not allow water to evaporate easily. Any contact with water will dissolve the caulk in the seam before it is fully cured. I would recommend using a solvent based caulk.

Another product I am trying to the first time is a silicone based adhesive sealant from GE (Iron Grip). My tests show that it has good adhesion to painted or epoxied plywood and it does not evaporate vapors (except for a slight smell of ammonia). In general, however, the other descriptions of how to attach the fabric to the hull work well and I did not have any problems.

Chapter 18: Skeg

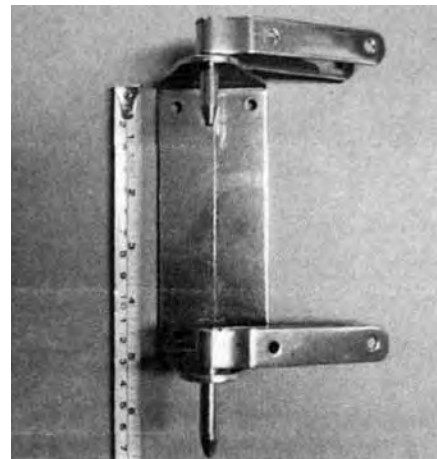
I really like the idea of putting a wheel in the skeg to help move the boat to the water. Once I installed it I have already used it to move the hull around the workshop. The one problem that came up was that the description for attaching the skeg to the keel does not work as described.

"Position the skeg flush with the back edge of the keel and attach it from inside the boat with large screws. You may have to ask a friend to help. Try to locate the screws where they will not interfere with the screws that hold the sternpost in place. Large screws attaching the stern post through the keel and into the skeg will give the stern assembly incredible strength."

It was almost impossible to drill the screw holes through the stern post. I had to use a flexible shaft because the drill head was too wide to drill a straight hole to the skeg. I suggest that these holes be drilled in advance before the sternpost is attached to the keel. As with the sternpost and stem, I glued the skeg on first with the GE silicone and then flipped the boat over to add the screws.

Chapter 19: Rudder Assembly

The plans for the rudder hinges are intriguing, but I chickened out and opted for the standard pintles and gudgeons. I used a set from Duckworks that let me attach the gudgeons with flathead bolts through the back panel: <http://www.duckworksbbs.com/product-prl-358-brg-parent.htm>.



Since I deviated from the plans for the rudder post I had to modify the rudder plate. I cut it slightly longer at the bottom so it would fit into the notch in the skeg instead of the hinge bar. I simplified the rudder assembly by using a piece of $\frac{1}{8}$ " aluminum sheet I had left over from previous rudders. I only included one line to lift the rudder up. I have found that the weight of the aluminum rudder is adequate to keep it down and I don't need the second line to hold it down. This also has the advantage that the rudder will kick up naturally when I run aground. The suggestion to include large plastic lids as washers/bearings between the rudder box and the rudder is great. It works for the aluminum. I used the tops of 1gal yogurt containers. I can't say how it works for a wooden rudder.

Chapter 20: Forward Mast and Socket

After reading the instructions for the forward mast socket I thought the system was fairly complicated with too many parts. Yes, it might look nice but there were a lot of pieces to put together.



To simplify the construction I attached two plastic (Carlon) pipe clamps used to hold down PVC conduit. One clamp was attached to the $\frac{1}{2}$ " plywood of the seat and the second to the cross brace under the seat.

I also used the grey PVC conduit rather than the white PVC water line because I could not find comparable plastic clamps for the white PVC. The conduit pipes are a little more expensive than the water pipes but it was a better color match.



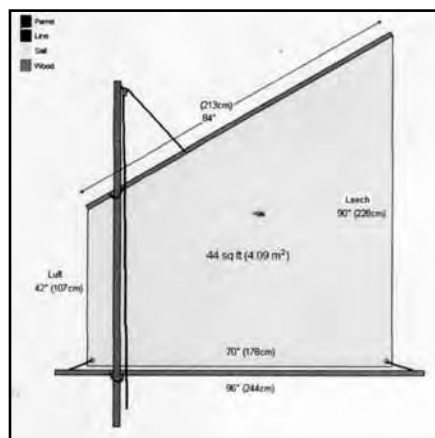
The process for shaping the PVC pipe and the plug worked as described. I did not come up with any options that might be better or quicker.



For the mast I went to my local Lowes and Home Depot to find the clearest 8' closet pole with the tightest grain. After pawing through a couple of dozen warped specimens I found the piece! Now, a closet pole is 1.5" in diameter and I thought that might be too small and not strong enough. To strengthen the mast I used the 2" braided, biaxial, fiberglass sleeves available at Duckworks. A couple of coats of epoxy and, voila, I had a great mast.

Chapter 21: Sail and Rigging

The sail plan as proposed seems to be more a sketch of an idea rather than an actual sail plan for the Flapdoodle. First, the plans show the halyard attached about one-third of the way up the yard. Drawing from plans show the following:



Lifting the yard with this approach will make it very difficult to raise the sail. There will be a strong lateral force on the parrel. I have looked widely in books and on the internet and all the sail plans have the halyard attached to the parrel, or near it.

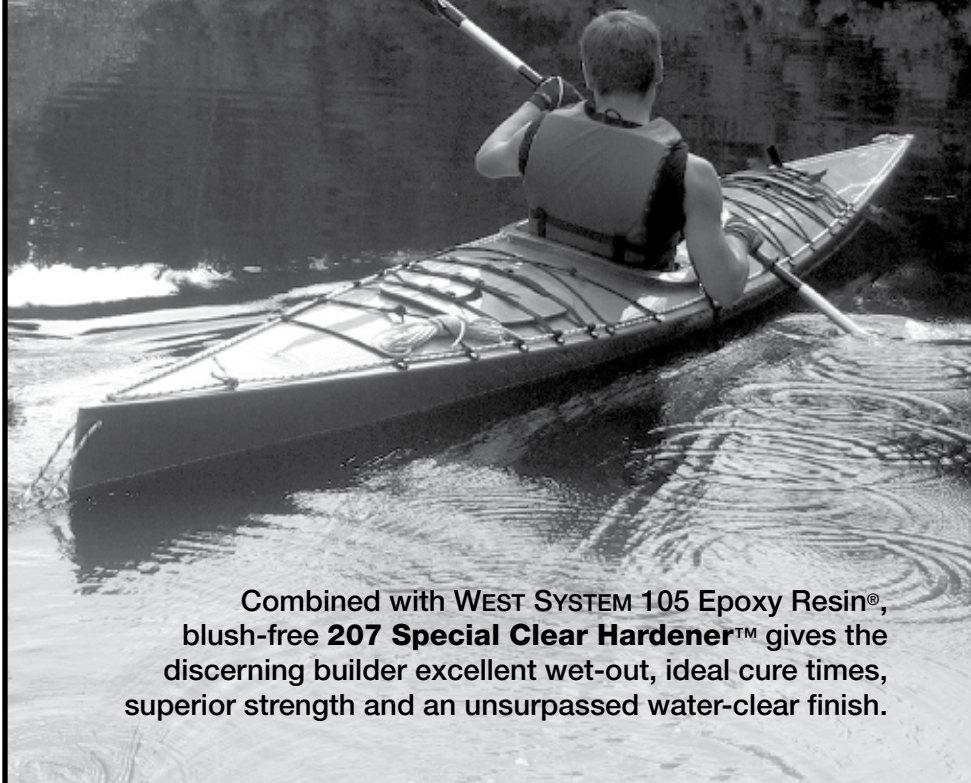
The sail plan also does not include some rounding in the foot, luff and head. Generally it is a good idea to put some rounding in the sail to improve its aerodynamics.

Finally, I did not like the fact that the foot is horizontal to the boat. This means the boom will swing quite low across when tacking and the skipper will get in its way. The plans for a small balanced lugsail I have seen generally have the peak at a much higher level and the clew as well to raise the boom. I used the conceptual plans given on the Polysail website (<http://www.polysail.com/lug.htm>) to make a sail of comparable size. The dimensions ended up being as follows:

Foot: 7'6". Luff: 4'6". Head: 6'6". Leech: 8'7". I put about 3" of rounding on the foot and head and about 1.5" on the luff. I found the concept of cementing the head between two pieces of molding for the yard ingenious. My one change from the plans was to use barrel bolts that went through both pieces of molding and sail rather than screws.

So now the Flapdoodle is finished and waiting for its first excursion. I have to wait until April 1 when they open up the launching ramp on my local lake. Hopefully I will have had my first sail before you read this.

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Next step, filling and shaping. Rowerwet recommends lightweight vinyl spackle for filling holes and depressions and repair. I decided to try it to smooth the compound shape of the stern. I found in the end that the spackle is very soft, even when cured. If I were to attempt another boat I would get a small can of automotive Bondo to fill in this area because I think it would give a stronger base for the canvas. However, I have not done any tests to see if TBII would stick to Bondo. Because Gripper seems to stick to anything, it may promote adhesion between Bondo and TBII.



The flared sides were faired in with “folded Great Stuff.” “Folding” is spraying the adhesive on a waste piece of ply or a plastic cutting board and using a plastic Bondo spreader, or similar, working the air out of the Great Stuff to keep it from expanding so much. Note that even after knocking down the Great Stuff it still expands considerably. After it cures the Great Stuff can be sanded with rough paper or a Surform tool. I first trimmed big chunks with a hacksaw blade in a holder, then smoothed with lightweight vinyl spackle. The angled stern piece that continues the line of the inner transom was also faired in.



Sanded spackle with #120 grit, sanded foam with #50 grit.

Building a West Mersea Duck Punt Variation of a Sawfish Kayak

Part II

By Mark Frost

After final sanding and shaping are complete, a wallpaper removal tool is run over the entire hull to make perforations for the TBII to adhere. Rowerwet calls these “glue nails.” I tried to make my own perforator out of a piece of oak and many screws. It was a failure and purchasing the tool made the task much easier and less time consuming than my solution would have been.



One hundred fifty or more years ago canoes were often covered in canvas and painted. Combining modern foam with a glued traditional covering makes this construction technique work. Rowerwet calls it “Poor Man’s Fiberglass.” Moved indoors to an unfinished basement so humidity could be controlled for gluing canvas and finish painting. I wanted a sturdier covering than the bedsheets that Rowerwet uses on the Sawfish kayak.

I bought 10oz canvas in a 72” wide roll to keep seams to a minimum, canvas tarp could be used but there would be more seams because the boat is over 14’ long. I was very pleased with the quality of material from Big Duck Canvas. I bought 13 yards to allow for mistakes.

First wrapped canvas on bow and stern.



Throughout the process I used small paneling nails, which have small rings on them, to hold the canvas in position, every few inches, while I glued.

Important Note: When cutting the canvas, one item I forgot to take into consideration is shrinkage of the canvas while the glue cures. Add at least 2" to every edge to allow for shrinkage. I have updated my cutting pattern to reflect the added material.

After centering the canvas on the bottom, I pulled the material over to mark the overlap for the sides. I used 6" for the bottom (ended up as 5" with shrinkage).



Glued the bottom canvas first and let it cure before gluing the side overlaps. The canvas will stretch and you may have to cut darts in the canvas to allow the material to lay flat. Work from the center toward the bow and then toward the stern.

Note that everywhere there is a seam or an overlap, it will be visible, even after final painting, so careful cutting and aligning is critical. I thought my one piece sides would cover all seams but they are definitely visible.

After wrapping the bottom, the next step is the cockpit areas, first the floor, then the sides and then the bulkheads. All canvas pieces were overlapped 3" to 4" to assure a sturdy structure.



I overlapped the canvas onto the wood of the mast step/partner. I would not do this again, the edges were difficult to finish.

Wrapping the top is similar to the bottom. Glue the top surface and let cure before gluing the side overlap. Do not cut out the cockpit areas until glue is cured.



Mark the cockpit areas from corner to corner and cut with a utility knife. I trimmed the flaps to 4" to get a good strong overlap. I overlapped the wood of the tholepin mounts and wrapped the canvas into the inside, again because of finishing problems, I feel putting canvas on the inside was unnecessary and would not do it again.



Lay the boat on its side to glue side canvas, it is easier to work and gravity helps the canvas stay in position, along with the paneling nails. Where there was underlying wood structure, I tacked the canvas with a staple gun using light pressure so the staples were easy to remove.



I used the paneling nails to hold the fabric into the compound curves. This is where I wished I would have used Bondo for smoothing instead of spackle because the underlying surface was quite soft. In retrospect, instead of gluing the entire area, I would glue the deepest part of the curve, let it cure and then gradually glue outward in stages, always letting each stage cure before moving on. I think this would allow gluing without the nails, which would give a smoother finished surface.

Applied a final bow piece of canvas to wrap over the leading edges of the sides.





Before painting, I “sized” the entire canvas surface with a 25% TBII and 75% water solution, this makes sure all the canvas fibers are soaked with glue.

Gamma Seal lids are used for water-tight hatches, see Rowerwet’s Instructible. Glued the hatches with PLP3X and used four bricks each to hold them in place during glue cure.

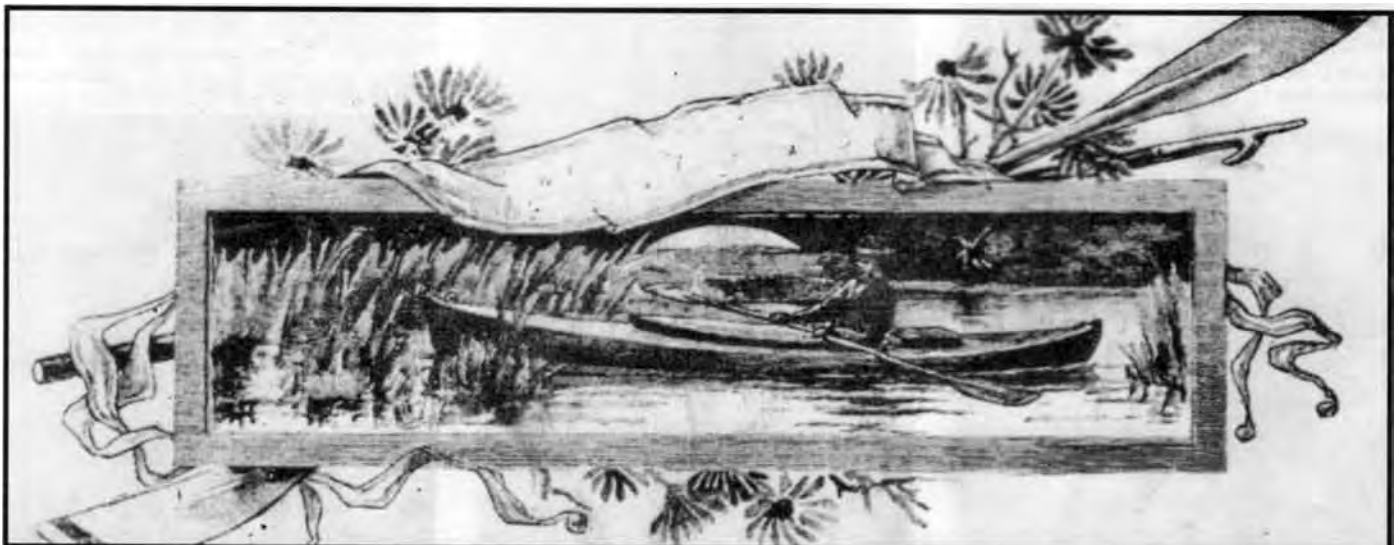
Boat is now ready for paint. I primed it with two coats of Glidden Gripper. Per Rowerwet’s recommendation on paint, I used Glidden Exterior 100% acrylic latex. I prefer satin to gloss for a more workboat type finish. Note: The dark green I used took more than a week before it did not feel tacky, called Glidden and tech said dark colors take longer to cure.



I have read that the reason paint fails on new boats is that the builder is too anxious to get the boat in the water and that a week is a good cure time.

Following paint, the craft is ready for the oak transom board and tholepin boards. Because of my experience with hull dents I decided to add a bowsprit so I would have a place to attach a small anchor for fishing. The bowsprit was constructed from a scrap piece of $\frac{1}{2}$ ” oak, it was not sturdy enough so I will try $\frac{3}{4}$ ”.

(To Be Continued)



I last left you with a hull that was open with none of the stuff that make it a sailboat. The holidays were upon us and not much boat building got done. I did manage to install the gudgeons during the holidays. That ended up not as easy as one might think. I had previously epoxied an oak 1"x4" into the center of the inside of the transom. This vertical piece of oak was to give something really solid to hang the gudgeons on.

OK, simple, find and mark the center, then draw a line with a square so they were exactly one over the other. OK, no problem so far. I held the upper one in place and drilled a hole where one end screw was installed. I then went to the other end and leveled the part and drilled a second hole and bolted that end in place. Fine so far.

When I drilled holes for the two center screws I realized that they were very close to the center, too close. When I tried to screw the #8-32 screws into the holes that I had drilled I found that the screw heads would not go past the round part of the gudgeon. As I tried to force the issue I demolished the Philips slot on the machine screw. I could no longer back it out either. The screw was jammed into the hole and I couldn't remove the part to start over. I struggled for a while and then got a hacksaw. The top gudgeon will forever only have three machine screws holding it on. Don't tell anyone please about my sloppy work.

That killed a big part of two evenings. A simple job. I will do it right next time. I will start at one end, install a screw, then drill all the remaining holes as straight as I can drill them. I would take the gudgeon back off, install the two center screws and screw them into place, then install the outer screws last. Make life simpler.

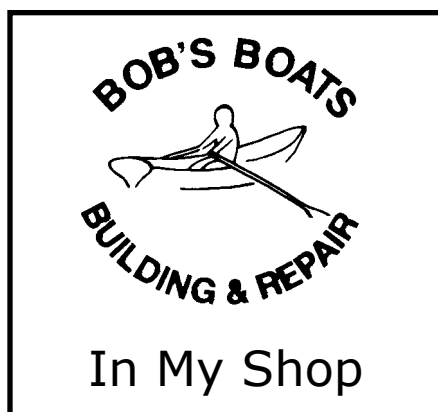
The next item on my to do list was to build a daggerboard trunk. A lot of this boat is going together with wood that I have on hand. I have a lot of oak planks that are full of knots. I cut a knot free section out of a longer plank and ran it through the planer and milled both sides. It measured $\frac{3}{4}$ "x7" about 35" long. OK, this will become the daggerboard. Now I know how big the trunk must be.

I also found some Baltic birch plywood. It is seven ply and about $\frac{3}{8}$ " thick. This is very stiff and stable stuff. I cut two pieces somewhat larger than the trunk. I applied fiberglass to what will become the inside of the trunk. I felt that I could never make repairs to the inside of this trunk so I better make it strong the first time.

I had a lot of fiberglass scraps in the bin but no 6oz. I had 4oz but I felt that wouldn't be strong enough. Then I found some woven roving and decided to use it. I knew that it would make a lumpy interior on the trunk so I used it and then added a layer of the 4oz. I rolled over this surface with a laminating roller and compressed the stack of glass. It smoothed out pretty good so I let that cure overnight.

The next day I cut these boards to nearly the finished size and cut out the fore and aft ends of this box using oak. I screwed it all together temporarily to see how well it would fit. I liked what I saw so it came apart again and I sanded the fiberglass surfaces. I then mixed a small batch of epoxy and coated the glass surfaces and the oak end pieces. Then I screwed it back together using the same screw holes and let that cure overnight.

It is a good thing this is a winter project because it is already a week into the new year. I am not like Dan Rogers from Almost-Canada. This boat has no completion date. It



By Mississippi Bob *Great 77 Part 4*

should be done before the lake warms up.

Now I have the trunk that the board will slide through. It will be attached to the bottom skin of the boat but the upper end will be unsupported. I used more of the Baltic birch and made a piece that was long enough to spread the load across the bottom and tall enough to give some support. I sawed each end to a point at the outer ends. Unfortunately this assembly will become a tripping hazard and also something to stub my toes on, that is why I taper the ends down to points. That will give me a little more foot room.

They got attached to the oak end piece and the entire assembly got another coat of epoxy. These new pieces will spread the load across a larger area on the bottom.



I marked the bottom where this assembly should fit with a pencil. I first drew a center line and squared it from the forward bulkhead. I set the trunk down where it should be and looked in thinking I could see the line. Hey, it's dark down there. I need a better plan.

I lifted the trunk out and drew lines parallel to the centerline $\frac{3}{8}$ " on either side of the centerline and put marks that would show where the ends of the assembly should be. I then drilled holes in each corner that should be just inside the trunk. I put four 16d nails into these holes up from the bottom. I set the trunk back down and had a perfect fit.

I lifted it out again and sanded the skin under the assembly, swept and vacuumed it clean, replaced the guide nails and set the thing down again. I mixed a batch of resin and added some cabosil to make a fillet. I put some under the entire assembly and set it down to squish out, then used a tongue depressor to spread the mixture out and made a nice fillet all the way around the outside of the assembly.

I let this cure overnight, then hand-sanded the fillet and began cutting 3" tape

to tab everything together until I had a lot of small sections of tape all trimmed up to go neatly into place. At this point I walked away. When I had time to complete this job I mixed another batch of epoxy and got out my chip brush and put all these tabs into place.



I wanted to paint the inside of the cockpit but I felt that some sanding was a must. I sanded the entire bottom of the cockpit, especially the edges of the tape tabbing. Then my 5" random orbit got a good workout. I wanted surface that would survive a lot of shoes scuffing up the cockpit so I needed a good primer. I chose to use Rustoleum Primer. The can says "for fiberglass and wood." It also says on the can "for above the waterline." The inside of the cockpit is above the waterline I have used it before with good bonding.

This primer is very much like Interlux primer only much cheaper. I bought a quart can for \$20 from a local Big Box Store. I had them shake it but they were too quick on the shaker. I requested that they shake it again but they simply gave me a stirring stick. When I opened the can, even after it sat upside down for days, it was still very stiff and hard to stir. This type of primer is designed to be applied and sanded again. It has a lot of solids in the mixture. I think that the solids are micro balloons because they sand easily. It still takes a lot of work to get the solids back into suspension.

I poured off much of the liquid into another large can, then used the stirring stick to dig out chunks of the solids and stirred them into the second can. It still wasn't mixing well so I made a stirring tool to fit an electric drill out of a piece of a coat hanger. This whipped the stuff into shape and after pouring the paint back and forth a couple times it was ready to use.

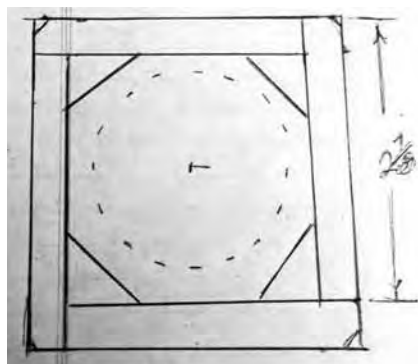
I wanted to mount the cover plates on the holes in the bulkheads so I put one into place and drilled all six holes that would fit some #8-32 machine screws. I removed them again and set them aside into the bow along with all the screws.

I used a cheap 2" nylon brush and painted the interior of the cockpit up to the bottom of the inwales. I also painted the daggerboard assembly and the inside of the holes where the cover plates will go. I felt that it would be easier to get this all painted before the deck goes on. The bow and stern sections will never get painted but I must be sure to epoxy the bottom side of the deck sections before they get put on.

When I applied the paint I noticed several spots where I hadn't sanded well enough. After the primer was dry I sanded again and added a second coat of primer. The idea was to build up some thickness with primer and then sand off much to get a smooth surface. I looked at the collection of paint cans stored on a shelf in the shop and found two used cans, one of white and one of sand.

There was a little bit in both cans hiding under thick skins. I carefully removed these skins and poured the white into the sand can and added a bit of mineral spirits into the nearly empty can and stirred it a bit then added this to the mixture. I had enough of this paint to put two coats over the primed cockpit. Then I installed the hatch covers. It was beginning to all come together.

I still need a mast step and that will be my next project. I have been giving it a lot of thought about how to build this part then it dawned on me how to do it. Sometimes one needs a pencil and a pad to draw pictures on. I remembered articles about dovetailed masts. I wanted a square box lightweight yet strong so I first built it on paper.



Again I was using Baltic birch plywood. I ripped a 24" piece down to 2 1/8". I made two of them and then I ripped a 1"x2" at a 45° angle and I had the parts I needed. I glued the corner pieces to the edges of the two plywood sections of plywood and let it harden then I applied some of my 4mil fiberglass to the inside of these small panels. When it had cured I cut off excess glass and sanded all the mating edges. Then I cut them in two or should I say four.

I did a dry assembly and screwed everything together. I next took it apart and mixed a small batch of epoxy and added some cabosil to make it thicker. I spread

the epoxy mix on all the mating parts and reassembled it. A lot of epoxy oozed out of the joints so I used a tongue depressor and reached inside and smoothed out the oozed stuff. Actually by reaching way in I was able to make a good fillet.

This box is slightly longer than the depth of the hull up forward so I will trim both ends, but first I wanted to wrap it in glass. I found a piece of 4oz just right size and trimmed it slightly wider than the length of the box. I rolled the box across this 4oz cloth 2 1/2 times and cut it to length. I mixed a batch and first wet out the box, then began wetting out the glass as I wrapped it around the box. I broke out the laminating roller and compressed this glass pushing it down against the wood.

When it was cured I sliced a little off both ends with the table saw. It was still slightly longer than needed. I stood it on end where it should go and looked at it. The bottom of the boat curves upward in this area and it would cause too much rake if I left it square. I felt that I needed a thwart to brace the step against and to get the angle I wanted. This thwart would also brace the mast and be some support for the large foredeck. I made this out of a pine 1"x4". I fitted it nearly vertically against both sides of the boat and fitted it around the inwales. I also had to notch this part to fit around the two fore and aft stringers.

This thwart should go in about 2" forward of the center of the mast. Just by chance this thwart butted up against the forward butt blocks so I did more notching on the front side of the thwart and came up with just the angle that I wanted for the step. I now mixed another batch of thickened epoxy and glued it into place with fillets on both ends and at the stringers.

The next day I sanded off the bottom of the step on my bench sander to get it closer to the angle to fit flat on the bottom. I added a piece of pine 1"x6" about a foot long. I cut a bevel on all four sides and set this block under the step that I centered against the thwart. I drilled a hole through both the thwart and the forward side of the step and

installed a 1/4"-20 carriage bolt with the round head inside the box.

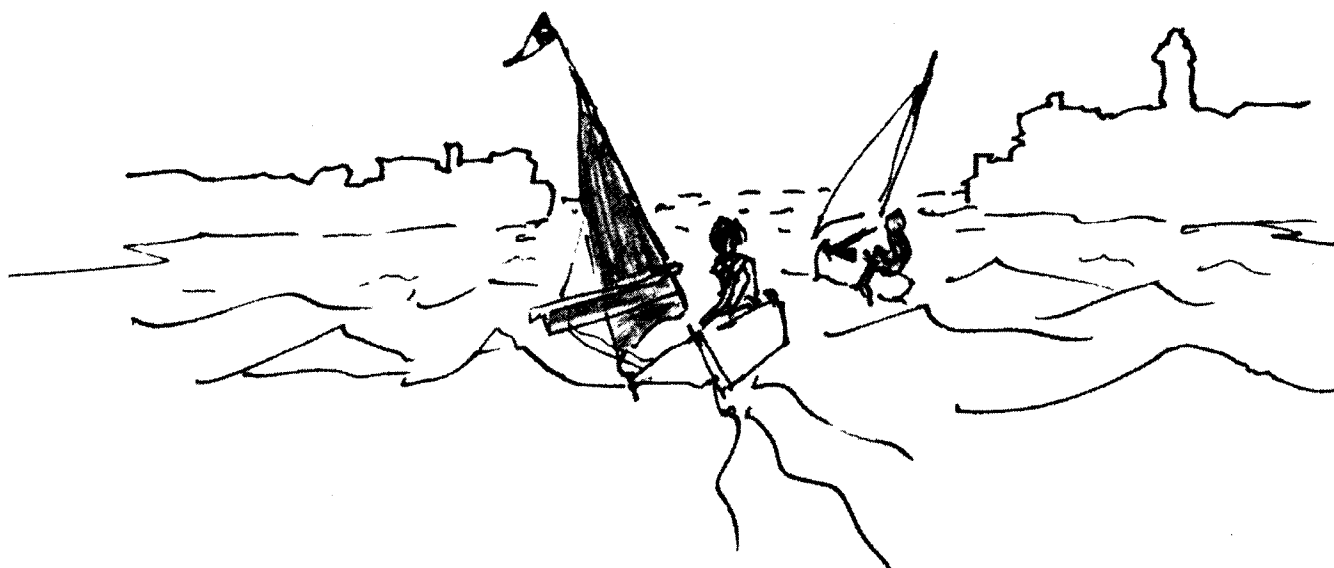
I removed the bolt and mixed another batch of thickened epoxy and put a big gob of this mix on the pine board and set the step into the mix and bolted the step back into place. I squared the pine board under the step and checked all the angles. I squared the step from side to side and determined that I liked the rake that I was setting up. Then I walked away.

You may wonder why I am walking away so often. My bride is in a TCU for rehabilitation. It does work out that each day when I get home I can do a little project and the epoxy is cured when I get back. Being a caregiver does take up too much of my time but 56 years ago I said "For better or worse" and I am beginning to understand those words.

For my next step I sanded the bottom where the step was getting mounted. I then epoxied the step parts that faced the bottom and thwart and unbolted the step and the attached block. I coated and epoxied under the assembly and next to the thwart. After I bolt it back on I will do a lot of tabbing with the glass tape and the step is done.



I also want to put two skegs on the bottom before I even think about closing the hull up with a deck. I will get on to that in the next issue. I am still looking at splashing this boat in mid May. We just passed Groundhogs' Day yesterday so I have to stay with the project.



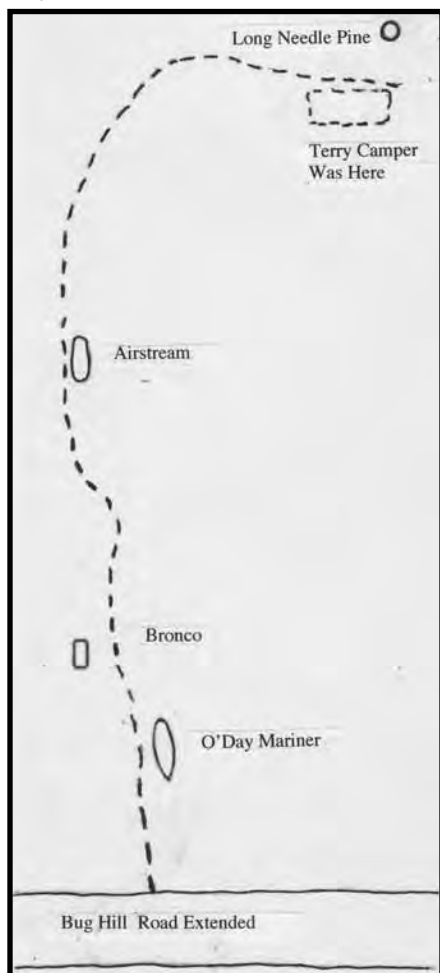
Having been requested to conduct, in effect, sort of a virtual tour of that which has been referred to whimsically (and charitably) as “Gloria’s Boatyard,” we shall begin here, on Bog Hill Road Extended.



The next turn to the right will bring us to the top of the trail.



I will plan to point out the various points of interest as we go along. Meanwhile, I think this would be a good time for me to pass out your tour maps. They’re very informal and not to any sort of scale, but I thought they might be fun to refer to as we go along. Here they are.



“Gloria’s Boatyard” Virtual Tour

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Aha. Did I hear someone say, “That must be the O’Day Mariner?” Yes, that’s it! We will get a closer look as we proceed down the trail. Please be careful crossing the “bridge,” as I fondly refer to it. This whole depression here, about this time of year, fills with water. You probably can’t really see the “bridge” right now but just under the snow here are several of those nifty ready made modules of which I have so often made use (and mention) of in the past, i.e., lading pallets. Yes, that does sound familiar, doesn’t it? Step carefully please. Oh, and please note, that area to the right of the trail that looks like an expanse of smooth snow is actually the surface of a frozen pond, so no short cuts!



Let’s pause for a moment here about halfway across the bridge as this is a good vantage point from which to get a closer look at the O’Day Mariner.



Right now she’s covered with that to which I refer as “Storm Tarps” which have worked really well so far. After a couple of fairly stiff windstorms recently I could hear the neighbors running their generators for days so it was apparently a pretty significant blow, but the wind sort of just swooped over the Mariner and ignored her. This is probably because of the shape, achieved partly by the arches I used for the cockpit cover, but also by the streamlined shape of the O’Day Mariner herself.

This venerable vehicle to the left is the Bronco, another gift from my brother and, while at present it does not run, it is wonderful for sitting in to read and think and wait for the bus.



A typical assortment of trees for this area of Maine lend their graces to the arboreal scenery. There is one particularly noteworthy long needle pine which will be visible much of the time as we walk. In fact, it is actually visible from the road. How tall is it? I don’t know. It’s pretty tall though, I guess. It stands in what used to be the back yard of the Terry Camper.



As we get closer to this next fir tree we can tell that we will soon be at that part of the trail where, if we bear left just a bit, we will be able to see the Airstream.



And there it is.



As we approach the Airstream on the left we can see that long needle pine peeking over the roof. About 100’ further down the trail is where some of the earlier episodes occurred while the Terry Camper was still there.

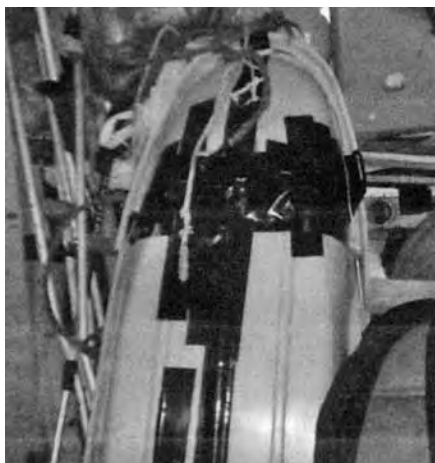


Incidentally, back in Part XIV I said, “*Dancing Chicken* and I have moved back down to the Airstream, at least for the time being.” To be more exact, this actually means me, her, lock, stock, barrel and work table and “for the time being” probably translates as “for the duration of the winter.”

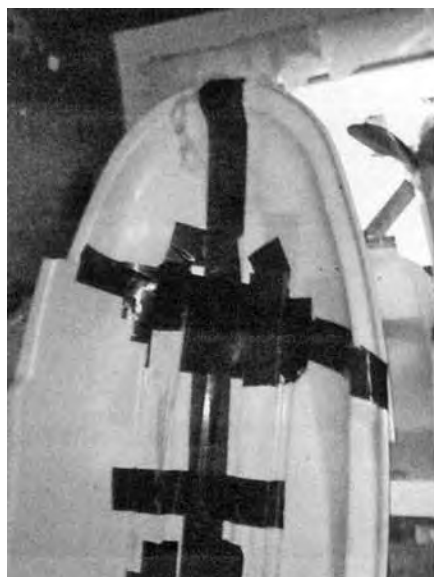
In the process of the transition to the Airstream I decided that I wanted her original worktable that had started in the Airstream and moved to the O’Day Mariner and is now back in the Airstream.



Hopefully she can probably move right along now that I have (again, hopefully) taken care of various technical difficulties such as a recent low tech equivalent of "My truck broke down and no one in town had the parts." Translation, "My sled, which I use to haul the 20gal tanks I use for my heater, broke in two." Hannaford and Ocean State Job Lot were both out of stock on those this time of year. So I fixed it, which took a while, but now I think everything is pretty much working fairly smoothly, including the sled. The next two photos are shots of that above mentioned useful piece of equipment. The first shows it sitting in the foyer taking a break after hauling propane tanks. The second is an interior view.



Then, this Sunday, a friend at church gave me a new sled. Apparently Reny's still had some in stock. While experience tells me that the reinforcements I have incorporated into the original will probably allow it to give longer service than the very thoughtful and much appreciated new sled, that one will probably be very helpful for stuff like groceries, etc, which are items much more reasonable to expect a nonmodified plastic sled to be able to handle.



About a hundred feet further down the trail is where some of the earlier episodes occurred while the Terry Camper was still there. Did someone say they would like to see that, too, since it's the birthplace of *Dancing Chicken*? Well, actually, there isn't that much left of it right now. In fact, it was in Part V that *Dancing Chicken* did her impression of a phoenix rising from the ashes.

Besides, to see her original birthplace you would have to go to Houston, Texas. Did I hear you ask, "Wait. What?!" and several exclamatory requests for the full story about that part? Well, for one thing I know that several of the party have lunches scheduled very shortly from now and will want to be moving along. But you can find the story recounted in full in Part I of *Dancing Chicken's* saga and yes, it did all begin in Houston, Texas.

Meanwhile, this is our current abode and the place where she continues (so to speak) her attempts to emerge into full three dimensional reality. Here's our "pep rally style antiphonal chant" from Part XIV:

"Will she splash in the spring?"
"We shall see!"



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What if John Hancock Had to Use Some Sort of Twitterhandle?

I was digging through old pictures, looking for something completely unrelated, when what should pop up but *Miss K* at one of her first launchings a couple of years back. All that brightwork is in the kindling pile now. Suddenly Barbara Streisand was trilling over the Frankenwerke Imaginary Sound System, "...can it be, that it was all so simple then, has time rewritten every line?" I guess the answer just could be a resounding "YES!" Maybe that's not such a good thing.



The current deckhouse has grown significantly longer and a just a touch taller. The accommodation plan has gotten a lot more elbow room as a result. The forward trunk has lost most of the headbangers and, in the process of simplicating and (presumably) adding lightness, we have hatched this scheme to dispense with the decorative wood staving.



There are structural implications going on here but this current iteration is set up to get smoothed up and faired and covered with a more "practical" covering. Canvas and paint. The idea is to soften the edges with a few wooden trim strips. That's the idea, anyhow, to dispense with all those inevitable substrate penetrations that wick moisture down all those pin nails. That's the idea.

Until I think about how *Miss K* has been sort of a "signature piece" in a world of cookie cutter gelcoat and vinyl boats, I seriously doubt most of the folks who simply have to come and knock on the hull at truck stops all over the country are reacting to my "ingenious" use of space and function. Nope. It's the wood trim.

Just about nobody is dumb enough to put themselves through such a thing the way we do it here anyhow. It looks fabulous and works for a while. Then stuff happens and, for a boat that goes just about anywhere as *Miss K* does, it happens faster.

With due deference to the Real Boat Builder Guys, the stuff we use is monumentally ill suited to the purpose. Spaulted pine is "interesting" for a reason, the grain patterns and overall figure comes from a beetle infestation that actually killed the tree prematurely. Basically it's the precursor to rot. The really interesting stuff is no doubt farther along on that decomposition process than the less so stuff. And everybody knows

The View from Almost Canada by Dan Rogers

(us, too, here at Frankenwerke) that decomposing wood transmits moisture more readily than sound wood would. Yep, even we understand that. And wet wood is naturally heavier. Soooooo, our morning staff meeting has gone way overtime. The moaning chair has been fully occupied. Oh, and another thing...

I'll have to get back to you on that.

Bah! Humbug! Be in All the Earlier Tuummoorrrrooooowww, Krraaaachhhhiitttt!!!

I kicked the Christmas Elves out of the shop today. Quite enough of this Making Merry, spring is just around the corner.



Well, after we get that corner plowed, I suppose.



Actually, those elves weren't real hard to get along with this year, they even left me a present. Not more of that accursed fruitcake either but something we can actually make use of. Already got enough doorstops and paperweights.

Nope, they got that little pile of cabinet doors (the ones I snuck out a week ago and slapped together) paneled, tinted and varnished. Not much, but something. That, and the normal Christmas Elf mess, they always leave one of those.



Some of the face frames, too. And just to butter me up for next time they worked over a really old cabinet door I've been hauling around for the past 30 years. I'm pretty sure it was 30 years old when I got ahold of it. Nothing spectacular, I just sort of kept it for "something."



There's one of those RV table flanges screwed into the backside. I'm figuring somebody thought it would make a boat table someday and, just maybe, it could.



Tomorrow is my birthday. I normally give myself a shot at some of that overtime pay that we keep promising to our crew here at Frankenwerke. I figured I'd show up early, get my timecard in the machine before the timekeepers show up even, maybe even get some of the stuff knocked off the ol' TODO list.

Guess I better put that egg nog down, huh?

The Real Boat Builder Guys Have a Decided Advantage

Much of the time they actually know how all this is going to turn out. Some Smart-guy Designer has already paced back and forth and pondered and visualized and tested and faired the curves. Those SD folks are truly my heroes and, no doubt, not a one of 'em would ever want to get tangled up in the hairballs we find ourselves plunging happily into around the Frankenwerke. Don't get me wrong. If any one of the SDs "out there" would drop by for even a few minutes, I'd not only offer 'em my spot on the moaning chair, I'd buy 'em lunch! If the Boss would ever give me a few minutes off for lunch, that is.

So far, the folks who actually KNOW about stuff like how a flat plane slices through a set of fair curves and other planes and arcs and all those geometric constructs that I didn't

learn that day they taught geometry, haven't shown the slightest interest in what we do here. So it would appear that I'm stuck with the wisdom I can sweep up off the shop floor. I actually think we have just about gotten all the planezunarks figured out. Just about.



Even most of the connecting stuff to hold the boat lid in place and keep it there are pretty much figured out. That's another resounding "pretty much" and that's actually pretty satisfying. But then intrudes the world of the zero sum. There's a line in the book, *Riverhorse*, by William Least Heat Moon, where a Montana farmer offers wisdom for the ages. "We've already got all the water the world is gonna get. If I get more, somebody else gets less..."

Other than adding bowsprits and bumkins and stern platforms, the boat just ain't gonna get any bigger. Sooooo, if the cabin gets longer, then the cockpit is sure to suffer a retreat and, of course, there WILL be unforeseen consequences.



And since the SD crowd seems to be in a minority hereabouts, we are content to do a number of "operational mockups." By just about any measure it is pure and simple, Sawzall Engineering. In this case I've been sort of imagining how things would work out in actual practice for a couple of years in the water and on the trailer ops. No guarantees but maybe we have it about right. Maybe.

The biggest breakthrough is to have separate sides of a single plane actually line up. Since absolutely no fiberglass boat built in the prior century will really be anywhere close to symmetrical, many of these operations suffer from lack of a reliable reference point. And since no boat that I would consider doing this stuff to is anywhere near flat or square, much of the transmogrification must happen as a work in progress. That, and having relatively flat plywood to work with is a real bonus. Of course, the flatter (and stiffer) stuff is also the HEAVY stuff so we've developed a sort of interesting strategy.

We don't cut the old stuff out until the new stuff is fit and bonded and validated as much as possible. Stuff gets in the way a lot but otherwise these old hulls can get massively wobbly and wibbly without the orig-

inal structure still in place. Or, in Frankentems, without the most recent bulkheads and frames and ribs in place. So the old "back walls" and door frame are still hooked on. Just as soon as the Special Duckpox Messenger makes his way across the mountains, we'll be able to get a lot of this stuff glassed down and then let the lightness adding begin!



For example, there's a doorframe thingie that hasn't exactly been invented yet that will go between those MDO panels and hold the boat lid up. Then that hangman's scaffold can go away. And part of the cockpit sole and a couple of interior cabinets and then let the Milwaukee Symphony and Philharmonic Orchestra be heard throughout the realm!



We may be disadvantaged, but we ain't shy!

Sometimes a Plan Actually Comes Together

It's always a stretch.



But the goal is coming into sight, a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel anyhow. It was, really, quitting time on the Sunday night shift. The Hawaiians on the crew kept mumbling something like "pau hana." We'd all had enough and then I started fooling around with odd hunks of aluminum extrusions and bits of plywood and other oddments. Pretty soon I was the only one still in the shop, trying this, trying that.



Until, there it was, the transition thingie that I've been trying to get figured out, the one that has to be fit and then removed to allow for getting the boat back out of the shop door. That one. It's got to take wracking stresses, it's got to mount to only a couple of the hard points available, it has to conform to the inner camber of the boat lid, it has to be moderately variable from one spot to the next over a 48" run on each side. And it has to be something that I can make with the limited skills available.

Something I learned while watching Really Smart Guys on TV is how those RSGs always go to the chalkboard and write stuff in either Greek or maybe that's some sort of Neo Swahili they work in. And presto, the formula for quantum mechanics, or human happiness or something big appears at the bottom of the chalkboard. So I figured, what the heck, I can do that sort of stuff, too.



There didn't seem to be much need to write in lambdas or chis so I just wrote in the local AlmostCanadian dialect. I'm just hoping the morning shift will understand what it was I was trying to show. They'll probably figure out that these assemblies will have to sit up on the box structures that took all durn day to cut and shape and glue and screw together. Those cotton pickin' things had to be made to conform to a slight fore and aft curve and a varying one to three degree slope in and a few other idiosyncrasies that come from trying to use what's already in place instead of simply starting all over. And I had to keep climbing in and out on two bad knees. Sometimes stuff that really should be simple only looks that way after a whole day of doing it the hard way.



That morning shift is gonna be sooooo surprised.



That Day Shift Has a Way With Words!

Not so much with spelling.



And they certainly left that “smoking gun” I keep hearing about.



Gonna be one helluva omelet, I'd say.



I'm thinking there's a dump run on the skedboard, maybe, next to that manifesto.

Shall we say they were, at least, thorough?



Frankenbuilding sure ain't for the cautious, probably not for the sensible either. That night shift is gonna have to come up with something pretty spectacular to top this one. Now, what did I do with that frying pan?

Starting to Get Things Back Together

First thing tomorrow that damn Sawzall is going back on the hook. After some roughing up and general smoothing the grinder goes back on the shelf. Then it'll be time for a 'pox marathon and a fairing compound marathon. All those panels have to be anchored and sealed with the original deck, however little of it still remains.

There's a new cabin trunk forming up forward of where the windshield will go. Hopefully soon. The idea is to have a traditional skylight up there so the top isn't cambered. But just in case things don't keep on schedule, we'll glass and paint it as is probably. Among the few skill sets in evidence here is the ability to cut gaping holes and put stuff in those holes. So if that skylight should pop up some time, we can pretty much just stick 'er in.

That temporary boat lid support up forward went away. Then I realized that what I put in to “improve things” was in the way, hadda put the old one back in. About a three hour fiasco, one of those, “Hold my beer, while I...” moments. That ol' tiger seems to be losing his grip on my tail. Maybe he can go chase somebody else around for a while. Maybe soon.

Swimming for the Surface

That night crew left one melluvahess for us early risers to confront. There was a plethora of edges and angles that needed softening and blending. Seems like we do most of our “precision machining” around here with the trusty angle grinder. We do have one of those rasp things I ordered from Our Father Who Art in Harper, back a number of years ago after the One True Authority on Just About Everything made his endorsement. So far, OTAoJAE continues to know whereof he speaks! That bundle of two edged hacksaw blades can leave a heap of dust and shards. It's a good idea to keep a close accounting of all knuckles and thumbs in the area.



Remember when you were first learning to swim and somebody convinced you to dive in after a shiny object or really big rock at the bottom of the pool or lake bed? Remember how long it seemed to take to flail your way against buoyancy, and good sense, all the way to your objective? How, by the time you actually got your little fingers on that whatevrr'twas, about all you could think about was thrashing your way toward the sunshine? How quickly the whole enterprise turned from one of “getten'it” to “doin'it”?

Every one of these Frankenbuilds has one of those moments. I'm hoping last night was the turnaround point for this one. I'm hoping that we can focus on gluing and screwing and 'poxing stuff ON instead of cutting and prying and splitting and grinding stuff OFF. I suspect this is one of those things that Real Boat Builder Guys don't face quite so often.

Speaking of RBGs, Nokomis Bob dropped me a note of both caution and encouragement. He told me to slow down and think things over and he followed up with “...this should be the last time you overhaul that old sailboat...” But if I slowed down and thought it over, I never would have made it to the bottom of the pool.

When a Pretty Cool Idea Goes South

We'll call this one, from the Belt & Suspenders Department, an example of what happens when you also tie your shoes in three knots and cover that with duct tape. Sorta.

This edifice is supposed to be in a curve and a few planes to land as precisely as possible into a direct line from the edges of the boat lid and the edges of the hull. To do that, it seems reasonable that things should resist twisting and wobbling as much as might seem reasonable. So the plywood panels on both sides of the “foundation” are glued and screwed pretty thoroughly. They are also glued and screwed to the once cockpit seats and sole. They brace each other athwartships of a perpendicular axis.

That's where things got a little kinky today. Mom always said, “Fiberglass doesn't like to make tight bends. You should make fillets and radius your outside corners.” The glass is there to seal things up against water intrusion. The glass and 'pox are ALSO there to add another level of sticktoot to this daisy chain. A bit kinky.

Mom also said, “Fiberglass doesn't like to span gaps, fill the hole first.” Something like that. Well, we had a few cans of spray miraclegoop on the shelf, seemed like it could be just that gap filler stuff.



Except that I also have found that if I “add” this foam into an already forming bubble it will increase in density. You know, get harder and less likely to compress. Also, if I don’t leave a passage for the solvents to escape, well, it stays pretty gooey in the center of that otherwise homogenous bead. And it sorta continues to expand over the next couple night shifts.

We sprayed this goop into the gaps and cut it more or less smooth. Then we added more goop to the random hole and aperture. Big mistake. Then we glassed over on last night’s swingshift. This morning things were not quite as expected. My gap fillers had metastasized into irregular tumors under the glass tape, bubbles, lumps, air pockets, general awfulness.



There’s always somebody who shows up and tries to figure a way to salvage the situation. Today I was that guy. I could do this, I could do something else. Things were getting into what we call “mission creep,” except, in this case, that particular creep was pretty much taking over the whole show. Finally I grabbed that screaming Bosch multitool and cut the offending goo and glass away. What’s left is a lot like the outer edges of a zipper after all the teeth have been pulled out. Yeah, pretty worthless.



That, and much of the still juice ‘pox drained out of the places I put it, through the wee hours when we were shut down to observe pre Thanksgiving. So much for being generous with that time off business. It pretty much ran in great streams across the side deck, over the rub rail and formed gooey pools on the floor.

Now it’s the night shift, again. Those guys operate pretty much without adult supervision. I think they’re gonna try it again. I’d better get back out there and try to make some sense of this situation. Just as soon as I get my belt and gallouses.

Gotta double up those shoe lace knots.

Sometimes It Just Feels Like I’m Treading Water

Even that takes some effort and, like some would maintain, just showing up should

count for something. So let’s call today “progress,” no matter how slight. Mostly we arm wrestled and shadow boxed with that old nemesis, the one that constantly reminds us that this boat lid is not only heavy and springy and (who knows for sure?) maybe a bit fragile. And that particular boat lid has to be lifted off before the boat can leave the shop. Then it has to be lifted back on and pretty precisely be realigned and refastened. This will, presumably, come in the depths of winter, like in January. So everything takes a whole lot of brain cells. Today I think the latest score from the Coliseum stands at Lions, three, Christians, nothing. Well, maybe one.

Lots of experimenting, lots of trying to picture how things will swing and sway around. This particular apparatchik showed real promise, but problems, too.



Quite a bit of ‘pox and glass went from the roll and jug to someplace else. That probably counts for showing up, at least. Counts for lots of rubber gloves and chip brushes now in the barrel.



Stuff is getting anchored and sealed, almost ready for fairing and sanding and fairing, then about when things were looking like quittin’ time, somebody came up with a pretty cool idea. The windshield frame needs to support a goodly portion of that boat lid. It would be nice to be able to see around it. Tree trunks and beams just don’t fit up there too well and this one took about four iterations. Yes, if only I could weld aluminum, by now I could have built an Eiffel Tower lookalike.

This frame just looks real promising. It’s pinned together with Grade-8 bolts. The aluminum tubes are pretty robust in their own right, they are stuffed with 3/4” MDO at the attachment points to resist crushing. The holes were drilled v-e-r-r-y carefully with a brand new 1/4” bit. Everything was checked over and over for symmetry and fit. Then, before cinching the bolts down, the mating surfaces were slathered with Devcon quick ‘pox gell. The upper attachment points will also be done similarly once the whole she-

bang gets drilled and mounted. This little epiphany took most of a shift to get this far. There are all sorts of aluminum shards, chips, filings and shorts on the floor now, but things just seem more like we got something done with this little addition to the family.



Lots and lots of thinking and stewing, and visualizing and experimenting. Lots of cutting and fitting and discarding. Lots and lots of motion, just not so much of that forward motion.

The Elves Are Here!

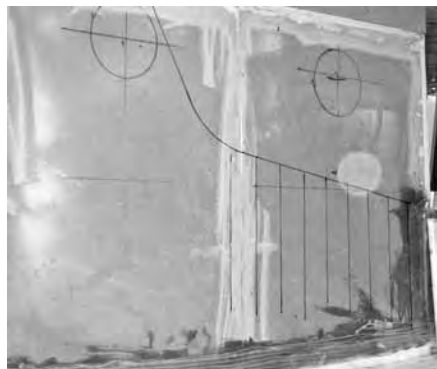
‘Tis the time of year when the whole Frankenwerke crew, day, swing and even graveyard shifts, get about a month off. Everybody has stuff to get done for Christmas. Boat building sort of slides to the back burner. I’m sure that, like in past years, sooner or later somebody will be out there “on their own time,” moving the *Miss Kathleen* overhaul along. We can only squeeze so much out of a single winter Building Season, but just about the entire operation is pretty happy with progress. Finally.

It’s been a bugger much of the way, so many stumbling blocks and detours. More

than usual. A few things happened to sort of close things up. For a big one, we figured out how to move this lady back outside without having to actually lower the boat lid to the floor and then have to get it back up. It took about a dozen protracted staff meetings, then poof! That Whatifya Guy, who always hangs around afterward kinda reviewing the meeting minutes as I write 'em down, simply said, "lift, back the boat up 6", drop, pull 'er out the rest of the way, pick with a crane from one end, lift the light end yourself. Poof!" So, with that, the aft mounting boxes and the forward supports pretty much flew into place.



And then when I was off to the local mom and pop lumberyard just up the highway today, getting pine for those elves to turn into dust, noise, chips and Christmas stuff, Doug says, "Ya need any boat building lumber?" Huh? Seems he's been getting a bunch of Alaska yellow cedar in bundles with larch T&G. Yellow cedar. OK, we can do that. We've been dithering over whether to forego the wood staving this time. That spaulted pine I used with that tigerwood last time just didn't stand up to being outside. Certainly eye catching, certainly "the only one like it in the world," but not really practical for boat use on the outsideterior, for sure. But yellow cedar, hey, suddenly, things were falling into place.



I brought a chunk home to play with. I think, when we get the shop back from those elves, that we'll set vertical staves all the way from the forward trunk, under the windows and, with a jaunty slursh, up across the sup-

port pillars port and starboard. I can cut 'em thin and glue will hold most of them without even having to tack. Maybe.



The 'ports probably won't even be necessary. Those support pillars will be pretty capacious cabinets and a porthole in the middle never really was likely to be a happy setup anyway.

Second shift knocked off early after we cleaned up and put the boat tools away. Those elves will be here in the morning. Wonder what I'll find to do while I'm waiting to get the shop back into Frankenbuilding mode. I do wonder.

Cypresses Nootkatensis

Doug, the guy who supplies me with spaulted pine, barkey/waney cedar and other "interesting" wood, tried to warn me.



He told me this stuff would be nasty to work with so I looked it up. As the current expression goes, I "Googled it" and supposedly this stuff isn't anywhere near as nasty to breathe and swallow and wallow in as the western red version of what's known as a cedar tree is reputed to be. I'm always reducing perfectly good and damn expensive cedar boards to piles of dust, mounds of shavings and long, thin strips. I sorta like the smell even.

When Doug showed me a rack of Alaskan yellow cedar, my eyes sort of glazed over. The price seemed worth the shot. This is supposed to be the stuff that the Real Boat Builder Guys use. According to that chart, it's supposed to be good for working with machine tools, good for durability, good for holding a finish. I asked Doug how he happened to have it in his lumberyard. Apparently it's been showing up in units of larch T&G. Finished planed only on one side and tongue and groove on the edges, it wasn't my normal choice in resaw lumber. Basically I was paying for a bunch of mill work that I would have to reduce to chips and dust. Oh yeah, and a big pile of those long and useless sticks.



Somebody had turned boat lumber into house lumber. I'd have to change it back to boat lumber and that means a ton of dust, chips, shavings and NOISE.



As it turns out, Doug was right. This stuff is pretty awful to swim upstream in. "Runny eyes, sneezing and burning" I believe the chart says as possible results of "irritants." I must add a few symptoms to that list, even with the use of one of my organic solvents masks with fine particulate filters. What's a fella to do? It isn't every day I get a chance to clad a Frankenbot with such close grained, clear, pleasing texture and color, stuff that is actually considered suitable for the task?



I threw the elves out of the shop. I got every dust collector running full tilt. We're gonna sneeze and snivel out way through this little task and then there will be one helluva blow down and sweep up.



I just hope Miss Kathleen will look as good, as I think she will.

The Anguished Cry of the Tol'ja Bird

When I went out to check on things this morning, one thing was obvious. That night shift simply musta walked off. I'm surprised they even bothered to shut the lights out. Stuff is in a melluvahess. It even looks like they threw the elves out, nothing but a few odd elf parts stacked in the corner and a few notes on the board. The place looks like somebody decided to get back to work on Frankenbuilding. I'll have to deal with this real soon, maybe tomorrow. Maybe, but soon.



It's beginning to look like somebody with bad knees must be working nights. He drags tools up that ladder and then leaves 'em in a pile. I've come to wonder if anybody else ever wishes they hadn't taken on a fight, even one they probably can win. When I ask, most folks just smile and mimic that cry of the tol'ja bird, so I guess most folks have better hearing than I do. I only seem to hear that bird's warning after it's too late to do anything about it. Kate always tells me that I need to get better hearing aids. Probably so, except hearing aids seem to get in the way of mouse ears and goggles and respirator mask and face shield and stuff like that. My leather gloves don't seem to be sensitive enough to work that tiny volume switch. I know, most everybody else seems to hear that bird. I guess that's why they don't have to wear all that bulky stuff. Probably why their hearing is better, too.

Near as I can tell, that night shift was really rippin' for a time. This morning there's a whole section of original boat missing. Looks like a whole new section of floor has to be invented. Nuthin' but a cryptic note on the white board for guidance, "Hng Lkr to stbd. Tbl & freestand chair to port..." No notes on where to put the head and the galley sink and stuff like that. I guess that I'm supposed to just know this stuff.



And what's worse. They just left all that milled yellow cedar stacked up, nary a stick was stuck. I'm guessing that had something to do with all that new fairing that somebody glopped around on the cabin sides. Just a guess.



Probably something to do with how long that stuff takes to harden up. But now I'll have to drum up some enthusiasm for building a floor and one of those "Hng Lkr" thingies and get that fairing goop sanded down and maybe even get a few of those sticks stuck.



A New Chapter... a Shifting Saga

When the smoke from the Sawzall finally clears, it gets a lot easier to see stuff. I think we're about all pau with the Doktor Destructo phase of this overhaul, and once the itching from glass dust and cuts from forgetting to put those gloves back on begin to subside, things will become a lot more manageable, enjoyable even.

Finally. We know what this girl is gonna look like. We know where stuff is going to go, we know how the outside is going to finish out. Stuff like windows and doors (split, Dutch style) are figured out. We know how the table is going to be shaped.

One of the hardest parts, where the head is going to go, sort of came via FB post today. Roy was demonstrating his bucket and peat moss arrangement, no holding tank, no water source needed. Convinced me! We even know where the batteries and switch panels are headed, installed gas tank, potable water tank, gray water tank, propane tank, cupboards, lockers, shelves. Just about most of that stuff.

Some of this wiring hairball (what's left from when I took a crowbar to the old battery box and switch panel setup) will find employment in the new setup. Some won't. That hanging locker I was wondering about will fit under the countertop stove, aft to starboard.



Here by the doorway. But, in many ways, the key to making all this fit was the decision to go with a composting toilet that several folks have recommended. Mine will hide away and pull out when required under here.

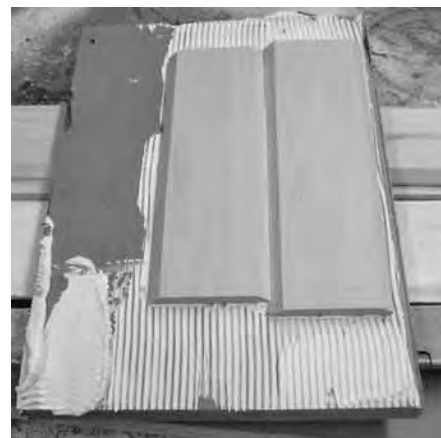


The table will be an irregular five sided affair back in the rear off to port.



The exterior woodwork will dwell south of the belt line and stand vertically. Now that a pile of this stuff is cut and ready for sanding, it should go on quite briskly. The substrate is just about smoothed enough. Just one detail.

Here's a test panel for the miracle glue-goo. If this stuff works, it'll spread with a spreader and give pretty uniform coverage. If it doesn't work, we have our ways, but I'll be absolutely thrilled if this goo works. Yes-siree. I do believe we are rolling.



The 24'x4' long bench in the no longer used solar greenhouse attached to the south side of my barn connecting through French doors (no less) to my shop was plenty roomy for working at table height on the hull, and a chain fall hung above allowed me to hoist it enough to easily move it around, tip it side to side, up onto its sides or even upside down when the time came for a rollover.



First task was to remove the bulk of the rotted canvas covering and a half hour of grabbing loose ends and tearing away in a cloud of Portland Cement dust (or whatever that 100-year-old canoe canvas sealer was) soon revealed the hull.



To get at the sponson (one side at a time here) for removal required removing the oarlock mounts (with notable rot) and the gunwales on both the main hull and the sponson.



The sponson "deck" canvas could then be torn off.

My Old Town Rowboat Project

By Bob Hicks

Part 3: Getting Underway



Now the detail of the sponson construction was revealed, each end of the sort of mini halfhull ended with a tapered solid wood piece fairing it into the hull.



The sponson was attached to the hull by screws from inside the hull through frames that aligned with the ribs of the sponson. Removing these did not release the sponson with some gentle prying.

Those tapered end pieces were nailed to the hull from outside into an adjacent rib holding them in place and had to be pried loose from reluctant to let go nails. Some minor splits appeared in the thin ends of the filler pieces, but not to worry, they'd be covered later and some epoxy should hold them together.



I left the midpoint screws in place while prying away the ends and further held up the first freed end with a bungy cord while prying on the other end so as to prevent twisting or otherwise damaging the frail appearing sponson mini halfhull if it suddenly dropped off when the prying reached its goal.



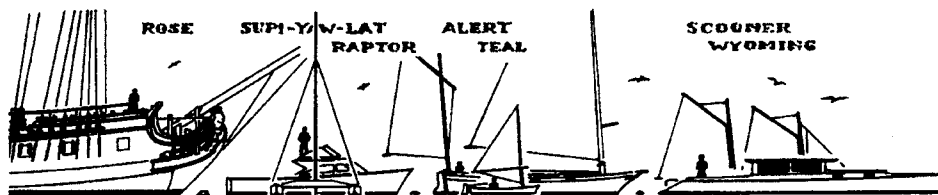
Success, the sponson dropped neatly down onto the table revealing its tiny ribs and what appeared to be a twisted shape required to conform to the compound curvature of the main hull.



Storage of these 16' gunwales and sponsons, while the main hull will be worked on for probably several months at my leisurely pace, was provided by hanging them on the interior wall on some shelf brackets.

Now it will be time to do this all over again on the other side, so it will be next month before I will have anything new to report.





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Last issue I spoke of new concepts coming up, perhaps the beginning of an extended run of delightful cruising types likely doable and affordable for quite a few of you readers, power and eventually sail. At least I am enjoying myself already. That was my claim and I'm sticking with that.

So we are starting with something reasonably familiar, something that was on Phil's and my minds since we did Design #679 in 2007. This light coastal medium speed boat was intended for work, science, overnighting or even cruising, depending upon layout. Medium speed meant 20kts with a 90hp outboard, with the first hull doing 27kts with a 115hp outboard.

However, you'll notice that the hull in these two photos is not shown going fast. In fact, at rest in a marina and then along Gloucester's Working Waterfront on the North Channel of the Inner Harbor, you could not tell that this Rod & Reel Commercial Fishing Boat is indeed the go faster version, not the go seven knots hull offered in these two studies here. The point is to illustrate her decent looks as built by two guys here in Gloucester over the winter of 2007-2008. Very convenient to have actual hull pictures on hand to illustrate that new hull concept I've had on my brain.

In fact, if you are indeed curious, go back into your *MAIB* archive and look at Vol 25, No 5, 6 and 7 of 2007 where we introduced at some length our thinking in Design

Phil Bolger & Friends On Design

Design Column #522 in *MAIB*

Design #68X

30'8"x7'8"x2'6"x 1x25-50hp Gasoline

Inboard Engines x 7kts

Displacement (light) 2,500lbs

#679, including the sequence of graphics illustrating how she could be built. And then a note on her construction that winter in Vol 27, No 1. Finally a brief report and pictures of her running fast in Vol 27, No 4.

With all our perspectives on the record in those many *MAIB* pages, not much more needs to be said here with her two layouts being reasonably self explanatory. The main difference to #679 is her Displacement Speed hull shape. I gave her a decent rocker aft to have her hull leave the water cleanly with a range of loads. And that opens the door to various relatively weight indifferent layout options. Now a few inches deeper in the water at around 17" of hull draft over her keel and skeg aft, she'll be able to carry more superstructure weight, or just extra cruising provisions, more batteries, tools and equipment and, yes, your favorite collection of Bricks of the Lower 48 States. Don't argue, that is funny!

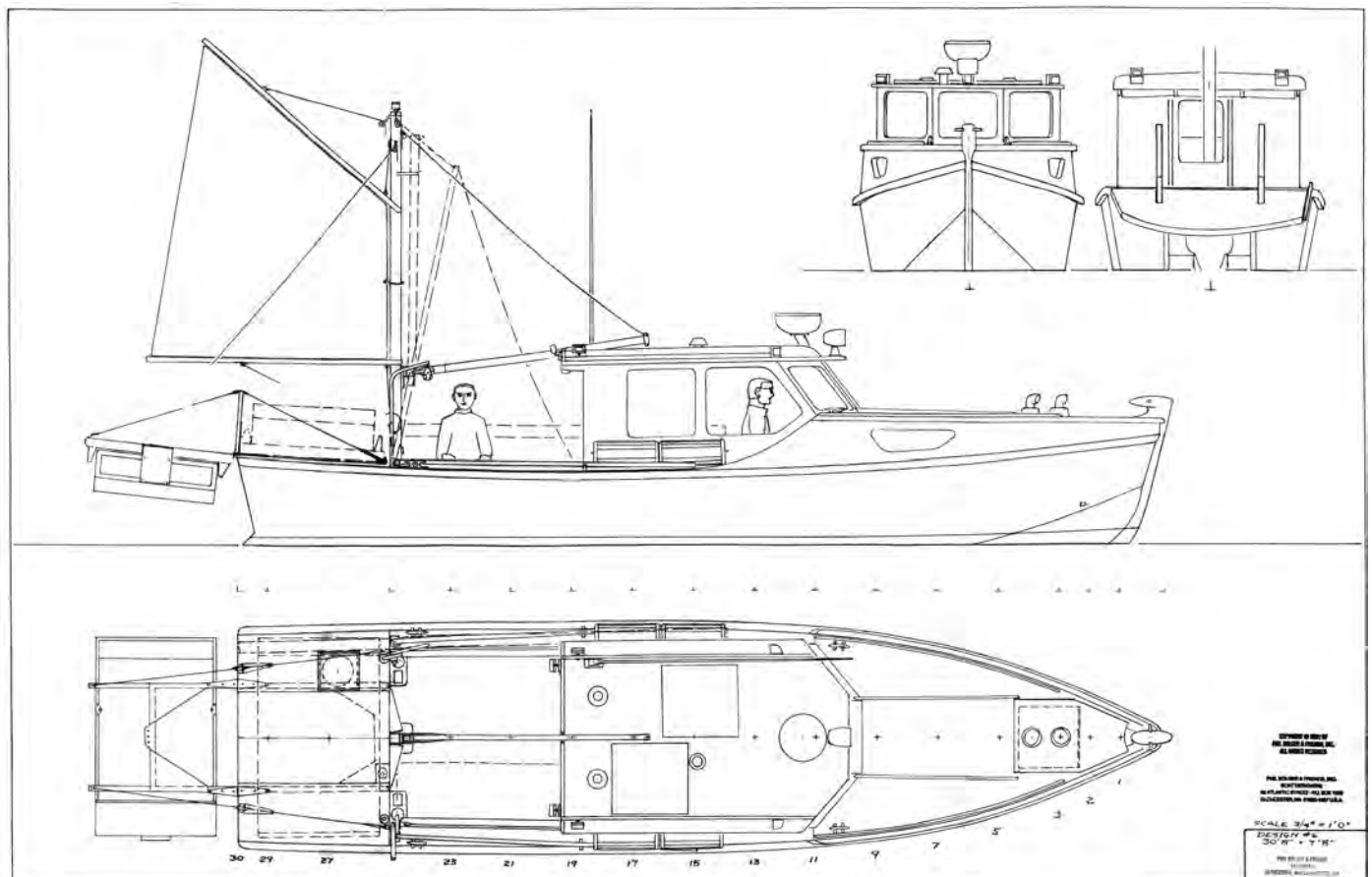
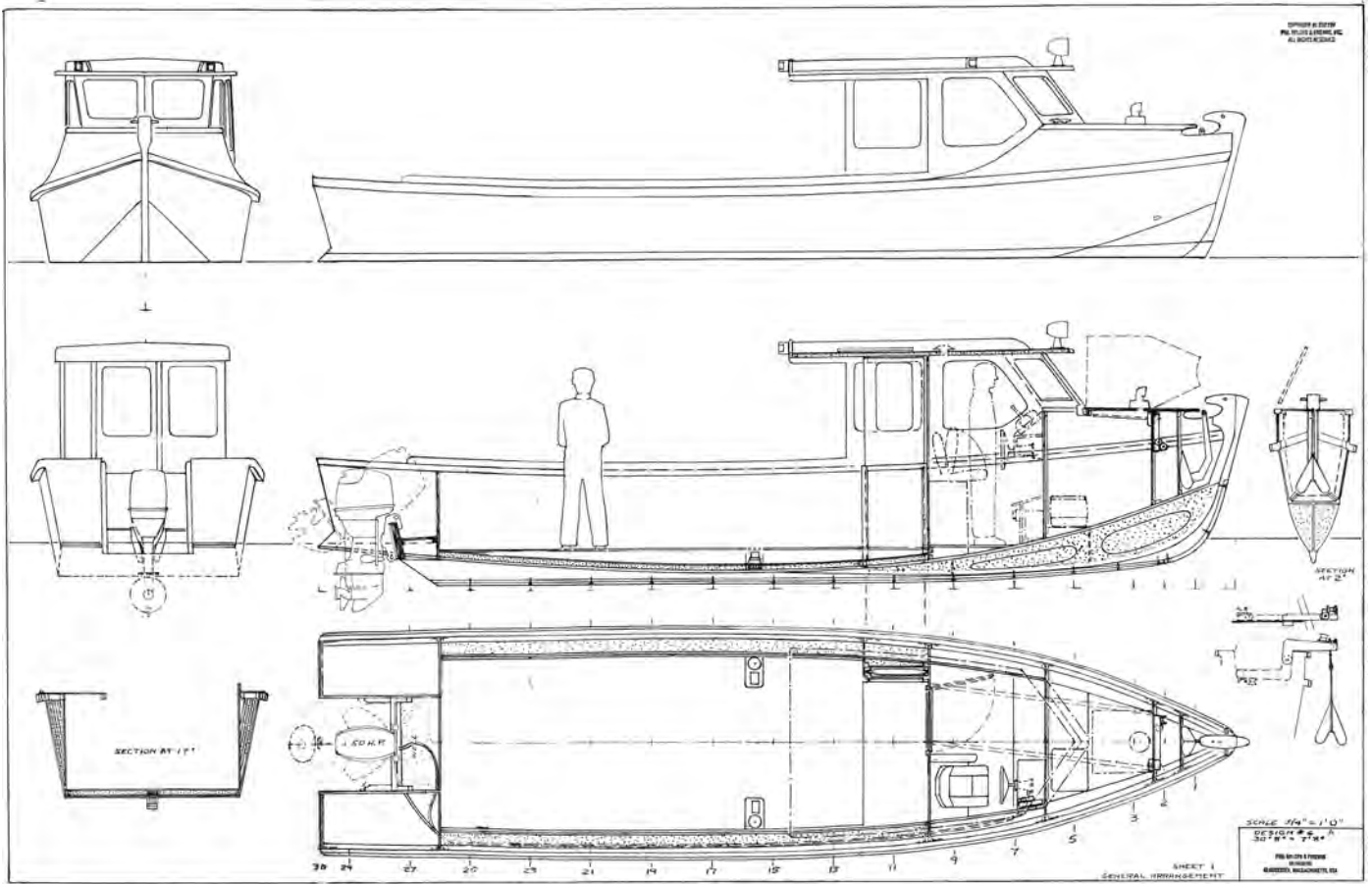
This shape is good for a 25hp large prop four stroke unit to push her to her likely

7.2knots V max. The 50hp shown is intended to be propped for low rpm at our preferred speed for best efficiencies and least engine wear, while leaving enough power to buck wind and tide, or tow another boat, or always impress with a big bow wave. And, of course, we can swap out the props while afloat, possibly between jobs, just string a net under the pitched up lower unit to catch that prop and carry enough nuts, washers and clevis pins to be able run again, no matter how much bad luck we may have that day. Been there, done that. I'd opt for the 50hp unit for serious coastal cruising or pushing upriver doing some "loop."

Illustrating that hull with the original large cockpit and two seat wheelhouse Day-boat option and the shorter cockpit two bunk Cruiser option, suggests that her displacement can well go up towards the 4,000lbs territory, inviting a lot more layouts and loads to match needs as long as weights can be balanced. She'll still ride her single axle trailer between those wheels and fenders, in fact, with her tucked up stern even better down the ups and downs and potholes of fire roads.

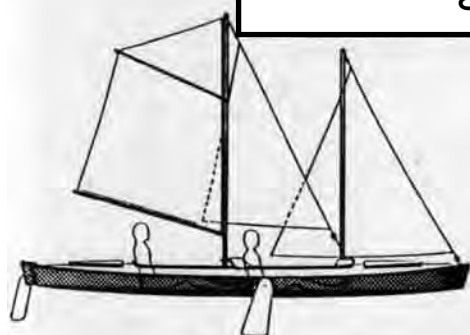
More on this hull in the next issue. As #68x for now, we won't know yet which actual design number she'll receive. I'll push this quite far, since in this size this is a project that is actually quite doable for quite a few amongst us. Lean, portable for fast interstate transit to delicious cruising waters via decent looking power cruising minimalism without stark Spartan self punishment. Or so I'd claim.



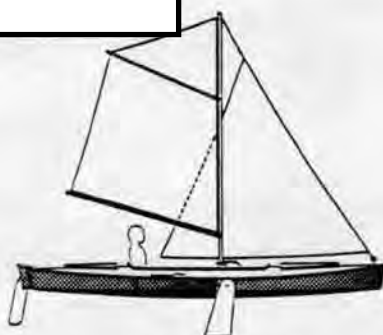


Just What Exactly Is A 'WindHorse?'

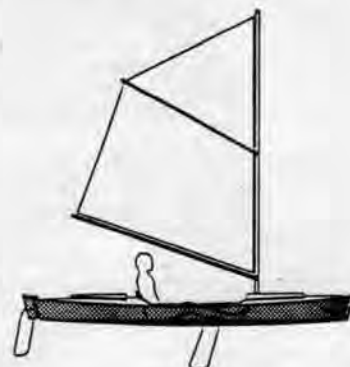
25 Years Ago in **MAIB**



GosHawk



SparrowHawk



FleaHawk



By Dan Leonard
Designer, WindHorse Marine

All three of my *WindHorse* designs (illustrated above) look pretty unusual, so I sometimes attract a bit of attention when I'm preparing to launch. People have lots of questions, but they usually start with something like, "Wow, that's pretty amazing! What is it?"

"It's a sailing sea kayak," is my usual response, but this doesn't really seem to satisfy, since most people have never heard of such a thing. The onlookers often pause a moment, as if waiting for some kind of translation. So here goes.

The Concept

The idea behind a sailing sea kayak is simple. Start with a light hull that's narrow enough to paddle easily, and then look for a sail rig that lets you take advantage of a good sailing breeze. If you keep the sail plan low and pay attention to stability issues, the result is a wonderfully versatile craft for informal coastal exploration.

I'm particularly drawn to this type of vessel because it's so well suited to combination boating-camping trips. The paddling capability is especially handy during the early morning and early evening hours, when conditions are often calm. There's nothing quite

like a sunrise paddle, for instance, with the mist still hanging on the water and a thermos of hot coffee at the ready.

None of this is really new, of course. People have been paddling and sailing around in sea kayaks since the early 1900's, when the Germans began developing canvas-on-frame boats loosely derived from earlier Eskimo designs. Since then, a variety of canvas kayaks (particularly the Klepper) have been used for expeditioning all over the world.

The Brits have been particularly avid users, while the Germans have continued to push the frontiers. Twice in this century, a German has sailed a Klepper single-handed all the way across the Atlantic, a truly stunning accomplishment.

I got bitten by the sea kayak bug in 1988, when I bought a sailing Folbot. It took a year of constant modifications to get it to sail properly, but in the end I was pretty well satisfied. We used it constantly.

Each time I tried to pack up for a longer trip, however, I had to deal with the limitations of a canvas boat. All your gear has to be shoved up under the front and rear decks, between the protruding rib-frames. It's clumsy and frustrating, and there really isn't much room.

Worse yet was the constant worry about how we would handle a sudden capsize in a fully-loaded boat. Our only flotation was provided by two small inflatable bags in the very bow and stern. I knew the swamped boat would be very difficult to recover (although we never actually did go over).

I eventually became convinced that I could build myself a much safer boat by starting with a hard-shell hull, instead of canvas. Among other things, this would make it easy to incorporate properly sealed cargo compartments fore and aft.

I decided to give it a try, and was delighted with the results. With tight-fitting hatches, the large compartments provided even more buoyancy than I had expected. During capsize drills it was surprisingly easy to flip the boat back upright, climb back in and sail away, just as you would with a Sunfish or Laser. The relatively small amount of water remaining in the cockpit was easily scooped out.

The rigid hull also made it easy to experiment with the placement of sailing hardware, since I could drive a screw just about anywhere (always a problem with the canvas boat). By the time I was finished, I had hardware all over the boat, so that everything could be conveniently operated from the rear cockpit. With quick-release cleats for all the control lines, and footpedal

steering, it's actually quite easy to sail for extended periods with no hands.

The Hull

My first twin-cockpit design was about 20 inches longer and a few inches wider than either the Klepper or Folbot double. This provided sufficient stowage for all the gear required to camp in reasonable comfort. Anything larger would stretch the limits of cartopping. Anything wider would be awkward to paddle.

I was so happy with the performance of the double (which we've used now for five seasons) that I went on to design a single-cockpit version with the same generous stowage. This winter I developed an even smaller version, with a full-sized cockpit but simplified rig and reduced stowage.

All three designs incorporate a double-skin bottom with honeycomb core. This makes the whole structure exceedingly rigid without adding much weight, and also provides extra insurance against rock damage.

I use a broad, shallow V-bottom with plenty of rocker, which delivers a good blend of stability and maneuverability. The hard-chine hull yields maximum stowage volume, and bites well into the water to resist side-slip when heeled over in a good breeze. (The single leeboard is more than adequate for upwind work, and not required at all when sailing off the wind.)

As for construction materials, I chose to work with the emerging wood-epoxy technology for several reasons. For starters, I prefer the look and feel of wood. Beyond that, however, it turns out that an epoxy-encapsulated wooden structure is much stiffer, abrasion-resistant, and fatigue-resistant than fiberglass.

Although it's not yet widely appreciated, a wood-epoxy boat that is properly sealed and protected with sun-blocking topcoat is also almost completely maintenance-free. As long as you don't smash it up on the rocks, or store it uncovered under the



The twin-cockpit GosHawk has two masts and three sails. The two forward sails are both roller-reefing, which means they can be shortened or furled completely just by pulling on the a string. Here, the forward crew is up on the special hikeout seat in about 8-10 knots of wind. Around 12 knots, the middle sail would be furled. At about 15 knots, the jib would be reefed down to about 2/3 size, and the main might be reefed as well in gusty or rough conditions. At about 20 knots it would be time to head back in.



SparrowHawk has just as much stowage as GosHawk, but just one full-size cockpit and one mast. Forward of the mast is an auxiliary bench seat with footwell that will accommodate an occasional passenger.

blazing sun all summer, an occasional hosing is all that's required to keep it looking fresh.

The Rig

I decided to use two masts on my original twin-cockpit boat in order to carry a fairly large sail plan

while keeping the overall center-of-effort relatively low. The first rig used a pair of Balogh "Batwing" sails, schooner style, with a little Klepper jib up front.

This looked pretty sharp and worked well enough, but I gradually became dissatisfied with certain qualities of the fully-battened Batwings. The top batten was often



Key to the versatility of the design is the relatively narrow beam, which allows easy kayak-style paddling virtually unencumbered by the rig. Here we see the twin-cockpit GosHawk being paddled solo from the forward cockpit.



A good dolly with fat pneumatic tires allows single-handed launching at almost any site. Note that the boat is fully rigged before being wheeled down to the water. The dolly also facilitates single-handed loading onto the top of a car.



All this gear can be stowed in either GosHawk or SparrowHawk, allowing extended cruising along any shoreline where camping is permitted. This is often most satisfying on larger lakes with island campsites. After unloading and setting up, you can then go day-sailing in an empty boat, and still enjoy your evenings around a snug little campfire. Sunrise and moonlight paddles are a natural in such settings.

this was the way to go. Roller-furling neatly solves the problem of how to adjust to rapidly changing weather conditions, and makes it especially easy to douse the jib in a hurry. No wonder so many cruising boats use it.

With half my problem solved, the remaining issue was how to design a mainsail that wouldn't interfere with paddling. I knew I would need a relatively short and broad (low-aspect-ratio) sail so as not to overpower the narrow hull. Beyond that, I wanted the main to be easily reefable from a seated position in the cockpit, and generally powerful enough to match the drive of the jib.

It quickly became apparent that a normal triangular main would either be too tall or too long in the boom, difficult to "pop" over when tacking in light air, and I could seldom tell whether I was trimmed properly or not, since the sails looked pretty much the same under all conditions.

Although I still consider the Batwing to be the best off-the-shelf solution for adapting kayaks to sailpower (nothing else really comes close), I decided to experiment a bit with other options. Because I couldn't find any other ready-made sails that seemed suitable, however, I decided to learn sailmaking. This was a slow process, but very rewarding as well.

As I discovered, designing a sail is not all that different from designing a hull. In both cases the main problem is how to cut and assemble a series of flat panels in such a way as to produce the desired three-dimensional curved surface. The actual sewing is not that difficult if you use special double-stick tape to hold the pieces together while you stitch, and have a properly rugged sewing machine.

I started with the jib, since I had crewed for several summers on larger racing yachts, and had always been impressed with the upwind power of the big overlapping jibs we used. While I was at it, I began fooling with roller-furling gear, using a tiny furling drum designed for racing dinghies.

It quickly became apparent that



SparrowHawk being sailed from the hikeout position on the side deck in a steady 15kt breeze with full rig deployed. Note the wishbone spar on the mainsail which holds out the upper clew with very little twist off at the top of the sail.

Unfortunately, the other options discussed in Phil Bolger's indispensable *100 Small Boat Rigs* (gaff, gunter, sprit, lug and so forth) all seemed to have complications related to setting or reefing the sail. I was especially determined to find something that would be easy to reef down in deteriorating conditions.

While focusing on the various methods of holding out the upper clew on a four sided sail, I began thinking about the traditional combination of a gaff rigged main with a topsail set above. There was something about the look of such a combination that I'd always admired.

What would happen, I wondered, if the gaff main and topsail were combined into one sail and a wishbone were used in place of the gaff spar? It seemed like just the four sided shape I was looking for.

I started with an unusual double wishbone arrangement but finally settled on a simpler design I now use on all my boats. The wishbone (which looks like a gaff in the diagrams) is actually attached to the sail so it hoists together with the sail on a single halyard. No separate control line is required.

To reef, you partially lower the sail, zip in a big 24" reef and re-hoist. Because the wishbone rides up and down as an integral part of the sail, it deploys properly no matter where it sits on the mast.

The whole arrangement is simple to manage and keeps the center of effort very low without a long overhanging boom to trip you up in a gust. Close hauled on a beat, it presents a nice airfoil with very little twist off at the top. It is also surprisingly well mannered when running downwind with scarcely any tendency to wallow or broach. Jibing is precise and controlled in virtually all conditions.

Any questions?



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The “rule of thumb” reportedly came from the days of sailing ships when the navigator (or captain) put his thumb down on the chart by a known hazard to delineate the distance off that was necessary for safe navigation of the vessel. No matter the scale of the chart, the thumb distance off was considered a safe distance (no mention of the size of the thumb being used). A “rule of thumb” that my wife and I used when sailing was that if we thought that we should reef the mainsail, we’d do so then.

Often other actions that come to mind in a given circumstance should be acted upon immediately (our subconscious is telling us something). A strange sound? Find out before the cause of the sound became a problem. Oh yes, the above applies to everything, not just on the water.

Another aspect of this is making sure those on board know where things are and what they did, so they can get the boat back to a safe harbor if we become ill or otherwise incapacitated. Not only is the location and use of safety equipment noted, how things work should be described. Things we consider of no concern can be something else to others in certain circumstances.

For instance, I read a report about some people taking a sailboat to a destination for the owner when they discovered water in the bilge slump and no visible leak. They had sailed on port tack for most of the trip and had shifted to starboard tack to the run into the destination. The bilge pump was keeping up with the inflow but the Coast Guard was called as a security measure in case things got worse. Help arrived in the form of an Auxiliary vessel and a larger capacity bilge pump was put on board to make sure in case the leak increased. With an escort, they made port and the leak stopped when the boat was at rest at the float. They contacted the owner at this point (no cell phones back then) and he replied that a connection on the head leaked on starboard tack and he simply closed the through hull when on that tack until he had time to replace the connection. If he had told them about that “little problem” they would have had a much more pleasant boat delivery.

While everything can look fine on the outside, an electrical plug can corrode within



From the Lee Rail

By C. Henry Depew

the connection and decrease (or stop) the electric current flow. One needs, from time to time, to simply unplug and replug electrical connections between the outlets and the devices. The removal of the plugs will, in itself, usually clean the corrosion that has built up over time.

Another problem with corrosion buildup is in the ignition key. We turn the key, the mechanical connection closes and all seems well until we turn the key and nothing happens. The usual solution is a squirt of WD-40. But if we do not have such a lubricant onboard, we try a “firm” turn of the key on and off a couple of times. This has worked for me because the firm turning of the ignition key “cleaned” the internal connection point.

“Turn right to tighten and left to loosen” does not work all the time. There was a major explosion, loss of life and much damage in a marina where a boat with LP gas devices exploded. An investigation found that one of the LP cylinder valves was turned wide open. It was concluded that the person killed in the explosion was trying to turn the valve off when instead he turned it full on. There are two connections that use left handed threads where turning to the left tightens/closes the connection. One is with flammable gases and the other is the left sided commode tank flushing lever.

The first is reportedly a convention that originated from welding apparatus. Inert or non flammable gas cylinders (like oxygen, argon) use the conventional right handed screw threads, but flammable gases (acetylene, propane, butane, etc) use left handed screw threads. This was a precautionary measure to ensure that flammable gas cylinders are not interchanged with the non flammable gas cylinders or otherwise connected to the wrong

part of an apparatus. If you have LP devices on your boat, you might want to place a sign above the valves to remind others that in this case, a left turn closes the valve.

With the commode tank, the reverse/left hand threads are normally used where the normal rotation could make the inside the tank nut loose. Most flush levers on the left side of a tank (tank’s right side) are activated by pushing down. That is, they activate by turning counterclockwise. In a normally threaded nut, counterclockwise motion loosens which means that every time we flush, we’d potentially be loosening the nut. So it is threaded in the opposite direction. That way, every time we flush we’re potentially tightening it.

Who’s right and who’s left can be a problem. On a vessel, the bow is forward and left is port and right is starboard relative to the bow. If the vessel goes into reverse for a long period of time all is reversed as the “stern” is now the “bow.” I read an item about a British destroyer with a badly damaged bow heading to port in reverse in the English Channel. The Ensign was moved from the former stern to the former bow as the vessel headed to safety.

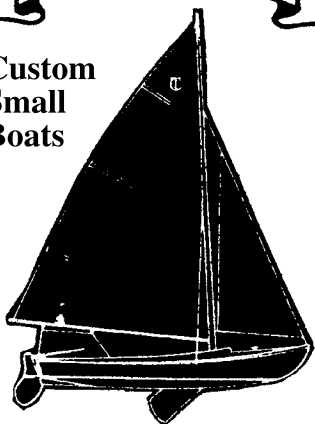
Left and right relative to the situation can also be found in the theatre (I spent some time working with lighting and sets in my younger days). Stage left and stage right referred to the stage looking out at the audience. House right and house left referred to the audience looking at the stage.

According to an article I read in one of the professional magazines dealing with marine safety, one does not use the VHF radio to conduct passing or crossing maneuvers under either the International Rules (and Inland) Rules of the Road. All such situations are described and the proper maneuvers for the situation are in the rules. If push comes to shove, “He said” may not be considered valid at a hearing conducted by the Coast Guard following an incident. This means that when you are on the water, knowledge of the basic passing and crossing requirements is important for both power and sail vessels. Granted, sailboats have the port/starboard tack and leeward/windward items to also consider, but the basic rule (thou shall not collide) remains in force.



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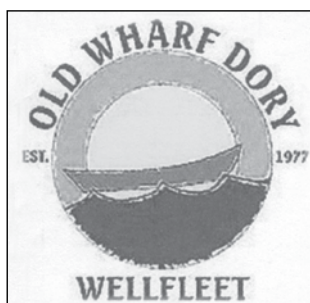
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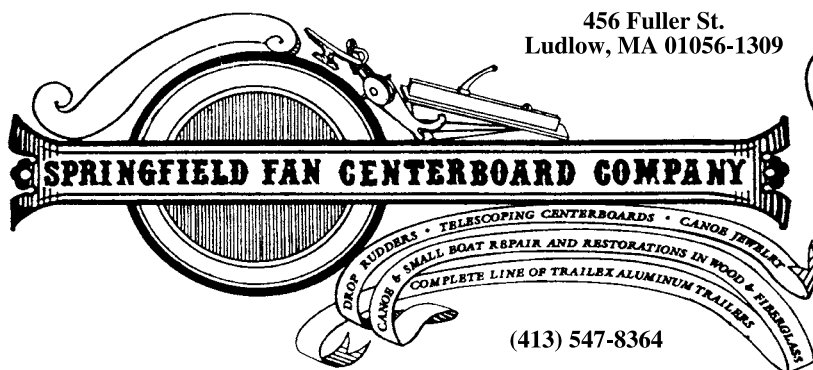
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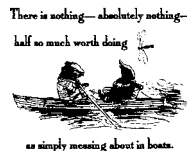
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